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## Black Sabbath

"We were four f\*\*king dummies from Birmingham, what did we know about anything?"





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# The Darkness

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**H**eavy metal: two words, 10 letters, and a term loaded with so much musical significance. While the question of who first coined the term in relation to the music we now know and love – William Burroughs in his

60s novels? *Rolling Stone* man Barry Gifford? Steppenwolf and their talk of ‘*heavy metal thunder*’ in *Born To Be Wild*? – is much contested, who knows? And, frankly, who cares? What there can be no denying is that 50 years ago, a Brummie band called Earth changed their name and played their first gig as Black Sabbath, and the rest, as they say, is rock’n’roll (or should we say heavy metal) history.

This month we celebrate heavy metal’s first half-century by telling the story of Sabbath’s genesis, looking back at the making of Iron Maiden’s first two albums, profiling Metallica’s much-missed sonic architect Cliff Burton, going behind the scenes of Slayer’s thrash masterpiece *Reign In Blood* and getting inside the current heavy metal thrill carnival that is Rammstein, and so much more.

It’s not *all* heavy metal though – elsewhere this issue we get to grips with Thunder mainmen Danny Bowes and Luke Morley in The Classic Rock Interview, go record shopping with Black Star Riders, hang out in a Welsh castle with Kris Barras, and discover what keeps blues guitar hero Robin Trower out on the road...



THE COVER:  
TYPOGRAPHY BY STEVE MITCHELL/57 DESIGN

**Siân Llewellyn,**  
**Editor**

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## This month's contributors



### MICK WALL

A former editor of *CR*, Mick also wrote the cover stories for the first five issues, while this month he appears to have written half the mag! His next book, *Two Riders Were Approaching*, out in November, is a vivid account of the Jimi Hendrix story. He also joins Danny and Luke from Thunder as host on their Unplugged & Unscripted tour in October.



### STEPHEN DALTON

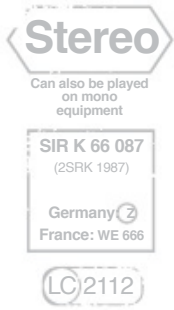
Stephen has been writing about music since the dawn of the industrial revolution, initially using a quill and parchment to review colliery brass bands for the *NME*. This issue he profiles Wagnerian porno-metallars Rammstein (p50), who once blew his tiny mind with a life-changing show involving penis-shaped foam cannons, simulated buggery and cannibalism. He has never been the same since.



### DAVID SINCLAIR

Songwriter and bandleader David Sinclair has led a charmed life as both a musician and music journalist. As a contributor to *The Times* and *Rolling Stone*, he got to meet many of the biggest names in rock’n’roll. This month he got to hang out with blues guitarist Robin Trower (p72). You can hear David’s band at [www.davidsinclairfour.com](http://www.davidsinclairfour.com)





5150

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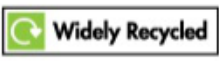
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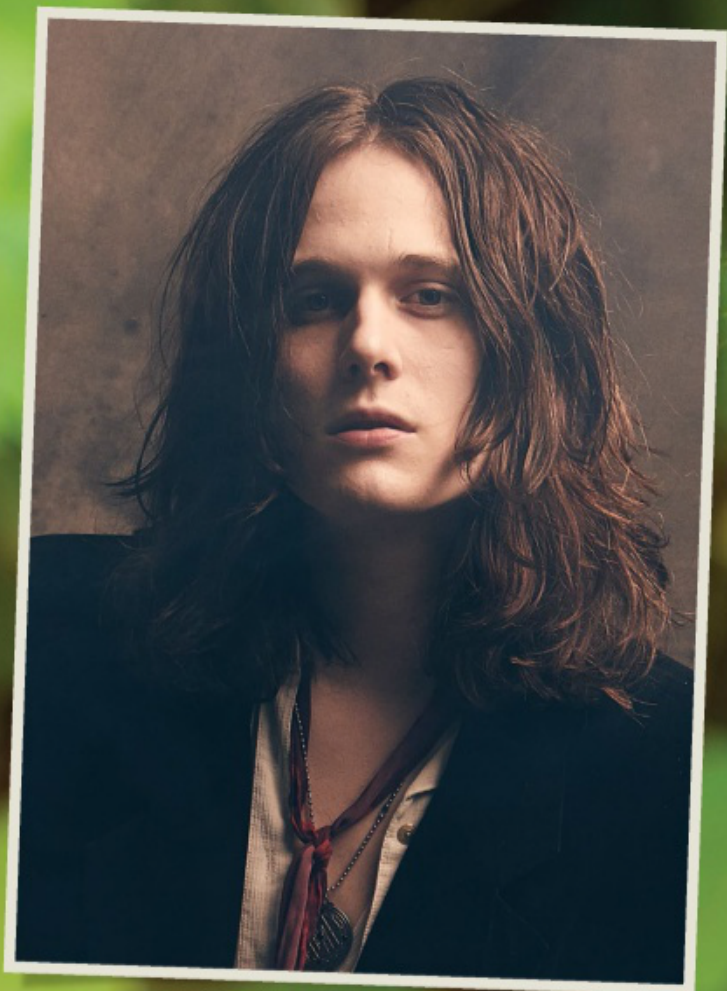
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Beth Hart and (inset) Tyler Bryant have helped other people with mental health problems by being open about their own issues.



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INSIDE THE  
WORLD OF ROCK

*the* **DIRTY**

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BETH HART: MONA NORDBY/PRESS



# Stars Put Mental Health In The Spotlight

Musicians are exposed to circumstances that can lead to problems. Thankfully help is available.

**BETH HART'S STRUGGLE** with bipolar disorder is well documented. "When I'm doing well and I'm out on the road, I love playing the shows. I feel free, I'm living the musician's dream of being in a band, playing songs I love to an audience and connecting with them. Other times, when I'm not good, I feel that the audience is hating it, that the band are disappointed in me. There's a lot of doubt and ugliness and fear. Even being the age I am and with the amount of therapy I have had, it's still hard. I'm trying to use my brain to work my way through and to feel better, but the very thing I'm using is broken."

Hart's experience is related to her own illness, but she also touches on aspects of the musician's life that can affect the mental wellbeing of many others. We're fortunate to be living in a time when the taboos surrounding mental illness are gradually falling away. Since 1992, the World Federation For Mental Health (WFMH) has promoted World Mental Health Day. Taking place on October 10 this year, this global event is part of WFMH's goal to "heighten public awareness about the importance of mental health and disorders... inspiring hope and empowering sufferers to take action and to create lasting change".

That change is still needed desperately. Mental illness can be devastating to sufferers and those around them. It respects no personality type, income level, social class or profession. You probably know somebody struggling or you may have an issue yourself. But you are not alone. In the rock community, Brian May, Geezer Butler, Ginger Wildheart, Eric Clapton, Brian Wilson and Ray Davies are among those who have been, or continue to be, affected in some way and have spoken out.

The charity Help Musicians offers support to performers from all musical genres, providing advice on finance, physical health and mental wellbeing. In 2016, after a 22 per cent spike in requests for help from UK artists, they commissioned the biggest study of its kind into mental health in the music industry. Their Head Of Health & Welfare, Joe Hastings, says they discovered that musicians are three times more likely to experience mental health struggles than the general public. "Around 68.5% of respondents said they had experienced depression, and over 70 per cent had suffered panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety," she said. This led the charity to launch Music Minds Matter, a dedicated, around-the-clock support line and service for music industry professionals, providing emotional support, advice and information.

Texan singer/guitarist Tyler Bryant had his first serious panic attack seven years ago, while backstage at an Aerosmith show in Nashville.

"I was in a room full of people, I'd had nothing to drink or smoke at all, and I was talking to a friend and his girlfriend," Bryant recalls. "I started zoning out, and heard his girlfriend say: 'Is he okay?' It was like a heavy blanket had been thrown over me. I was looking around at people and went into a spiral."

Now Bryant's on beta blockers, which reduce the accelerant effect adrenaline has on the heart rate. He was briefly on the anti-depressant Xanax, but found that it completely flattened his creative impulse: "I didn't care about anything enough, I couldn't find the fire I normally had when I was making music."

Keeping that creative edge is just one delicate factor in the life of a jobbing musician. They're exposed to drastic swings in fortune – the high of a sell-out show, the low of a bad review – and the physical and mental demands of touring, with long hours of travel and periods away from loved ones. Alcohol and drugs can be a coping mechanism for some, and a harmful addiction for others. "Being a musician can be rewarding," says Joe Hastings, "but the connection between performance, identity and self-belief can leave musicians vulnerable. The music industry is a unique, stressful and precarious one, requiring luck as well as talent. A career in music takes place in an atmosphere

of constant criticism, with social media providing a never-ending flow of opinions from fans, journalists, friends, bloggers and fellow musicians. People are in a constant feedback loop, which can mean self-belief can take a constant pounding."

For all but those on music's highest rung, money and employment worries can be a constant source of mental pressure. "People have this misconception that musicians do what they do for fame and fortune, but that's ridiculous," says Beth Hart. "Most of us do it because we can't *not* do it. We're looking for a way of not feeling so worthless. The chance of success or stability are like a shot in the dark, and even if you do 'make it' it's still fleeting and up-and-down."

Tyler Bryant agrees. "Whatever rock musician you talk to, you'll find they started doing this because it's fun and makes them feel good. Then these other factors – other people's expectations, people counting on you for their livelihood – they all get baked up into something that was free and beautiful. For me, I have to keep perspective and harness my own mind. I take a step out of it, breathe and just play my guitar. This is me doing the best I can. I always tell myself that I'm not broken."

The focus of this year's World Mental Health Day is suicide prevention. The World Health Organisation estimates that 800,000 people take their own lives every year, and the WFMH's aim is to push this epidemic further up the public health agenda. Recent tragic losses in the rock community, such as Chris Cornell, Chester Bennington and Huntress's Jill Janus serve to emphasise the extent of the issue.

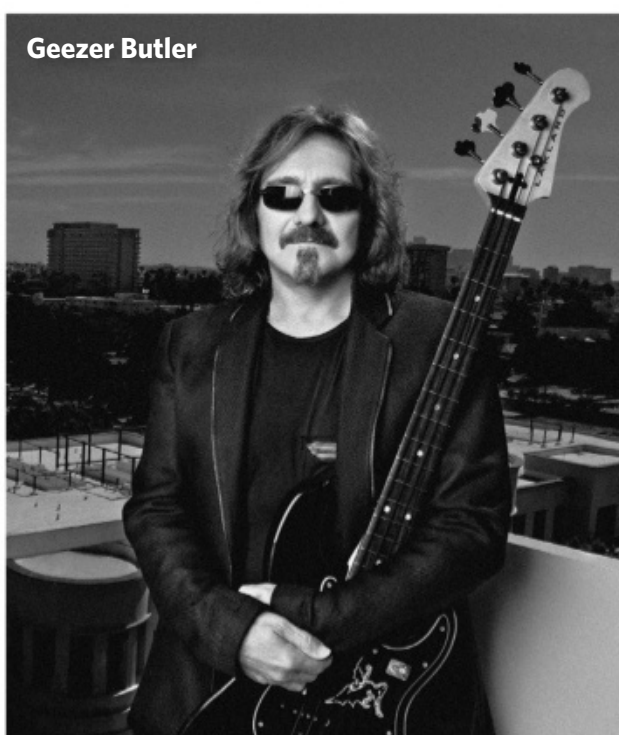
"Reach out for help," Beth Hart says to anyone who may be suffering. "As brutal as they can be, people can also be incredibly compassionate and empathetic. Surround yourself with people who are tender and kind and patient."

"Having a panic attack in a room full of people, that's a lonely and dangerous place to be," says Bryant. "But you need to remember that you're not alone – a lot of other people feel like that, and there are ways to deal with it. It can get better." **GM**

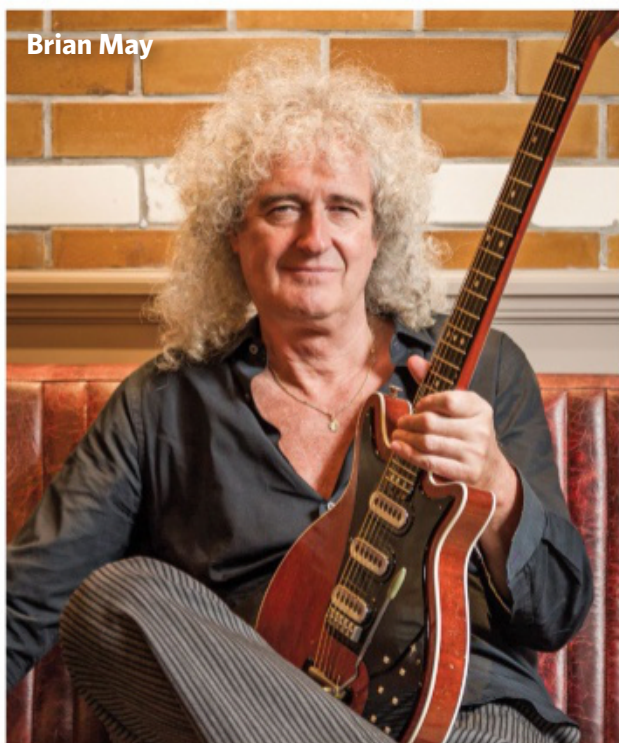
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*If you are struggling you can also contact Samaritans: 116123.*

*You can find more information on World Mental Health Day at [wfmh.global/world-mental-health-day-2019](http://wfmh.global/world-mental-health-day-2019)*



Geezer Butler



Brian May



# RIP

Thank you  
and good night.

## Larry 'The Mole' Taylor

June 26, 1942 – August 19, 2019

Larry Taylor was the bass player with the original Canned Heat line-up, and appeared with them at both Monterey Pop and Woodstock, before joining John Mayall's Bluesbreakers. His CV also includes credits with Tom Waits, Jerry Lee Lewis, Albert King, Buddy Guy and John Lee Hooker. The 77-year-old had fought cancer for 12 years.

## Freddie Bannister

December 3, 1934 – August 11, 2019

The British concert promoter passed away 40 years to the day since his final Knebworth Festival, headlined by Led Zeppelin. That series of summer concerts featured appearances from Pink Floyd, the Rolling Stones and Genesis, among others. Michael Eavis cites Bannister as the inspiration behind Glastonbury. He was 84, and had been battling cancer.

## Neal Casal

November 2, 1968 – August 26, 2019

The New Jersey-born guitarist who played with the Chris Robinson Brotherhood, Shooter Jennings and Ryan Adams and others, as well as being a prolific singer-songwriter in his own right, died without warning and of unexplained causes as this issue went to press. He was just 50 years old. "I am absolutely devastated," said Jennings. "Neal was always my favourite picker in LA."

## Lol Mason

Died July 31, 2019

A proud Brummie, Mason fronted two chart bands from the Midlands, and had Top 10 hits with both: City Boy's 5.7.0.5 in 1978, and five years later with The Maisonnets and *Heartache Avenue*. City Boy were among the first British bands produced by Robert John 'Mutt' Lange. Mason, who was 69, died of a heart attack, after complications following a kidney transplant.

## Lizzie Grey

August 13, 1958 – August 5, 2019

Nikki Sixx has led the tributes to his former London bandmate after the 60-year-old guitarist lost an 11-year fight with the rare brain disorder Lewy body disease. Born Stephen Perry, Grey also worked with the band Ultra Pop (who changed their name to Spiders & Snakes). "I will miss him and his passion for music and life," said Sixx.



## Peter Fonda

February 23, 1940  
– August 16, 2019

Peter Fonda wasn't a musician but the American actor, director and screenwriter became friends with and influenced The Byrds and The Beatles, and *Easy Rider*, his 1969 road movie about two long-haired bikers travelling across the United States, made him a counterculture icon. The 79-year-old died from respiratory failure caused by lung cancer.



## Johnny Clegg

June 7, 1953  
– July 16, 2019

As a pop star and political activist, Lancashire-born Clegg became one of South Africa's most popular musicians. Working as a solo artist and as part of the group Juluka, his opposition to apartheid led to him being awarded an OBE. The 66-year-old had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2015.

## Nicky Wonder

Died August 8, 2019

Brian Wilson broke the news that Nicky Wonder had died in his sleep. "Nicky was my favourite guitar player ever," said Wilson. "He will be missed beyond words." Born Nick Walusko, he balanced performing as part of Wilson's solo group with his own LA-based power-pop band The Wondermints.

## George 'GG' Guidotti

Died August 18, 2019

Bassist Guidotti was a member of the Philadelphia-based melodic hard rock group Heaven's Edge. The 57-year-old, who had participated in the group's comeback at the Firefest in Nottingham in 2013, was diagnosed with lung cancer. He was 57.

# DA Pennebaker

July 15, 1925 – August 1, 2019

## BORN IN ILLINOIS,

the son of a successful photographer, Donn Alan Pennebaker made some of the most important rock documentaries of all time. Once described as "arguably the preeminent chronicler of 1960s counterculture", his work included politically based documentaries along with musical endeavours, an early example of the latter being *Dont Look Back*, a movie that followed Bob Dylan's 1965 concert tour of England. Later on, the snowballing success of concert films such as *Monterey Pop* – which covered the 1967 event of the same name starring The Who, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, Jefferson Airplane and Big Brother & The Holding Company – saw Pennebaker collaborate with John Lennon and Yoko Ono on *Up*



*Your Legs Forever* in 1971. He also made important works pertaining to Alice Cooper, Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Depeche Mode.

Pennebaker's unpretentious style was unique. His films were usually narration-free and shot with a hand-held camera, making the viewer feel as though they were in

the same room as the subjects, although he wasn't fond of the term 'documentary' being applied to what he did. "For me, I think of them as home movies," he explained, "because they're made by one person and not made with the expectancy of a large return."

Pennebaker's son Frazer confirmed DA's death of natural causes. He was 94 years old. **DL**

# Nigel Benjamin

September 12, 1954 – July 31, 2019

## NORTH LONDON-BORN,

Southend-raised Benjamin is known primarily as the man who replaced Ian Hunter in Mott (the band) in 1975, following the dissolution of Mott The Hoople. Their two albums, *Drive On* and *Shouting & Pointing*, retain cult status to this day, although in typically contrary form the frontman regrets joining them. Years later, asked whether he might do two things differently in relation to his time with the group, he replied: "I would not return their call. And I would not return their call when they called again."

Four years later, following a spell with English Assassin, he became a bandmate of Nikki Sixx in the eternal Los Angeles



hopefuls London, but after around 20 shows on Sunset Strip Sixx left to form Mötley Crüe. Prior to that band finding Vince Neil, there were rumblings of Benjamin joining them, but he was fried with glam-rock.

"I'd done a lot of that stuff years earlier, when it was new," he explained. "I didn't want to do metal. You must

trust those that you form bands with, and I didn't trust Nikki."

Morgan Fisher of Mott The Hoople and Mott wrote: "It is known that we had our differences, but we also created some powerful songs together."

Benjamin was 64 years old. The cause of death is yet to be revealed. **DL**

# Ian Gibbons

July 18, 1952 – August 1, 2019

**SIR RAY DAVIES**, Dave Davies and Mick Avory of The Kinks have paid tribute to their former bandmate following his death from bladder cancer at the age of 67. Keyboard player and accordion player Gibbons was a part of The Kinks from 1979 until 1989, returning in 1993 before leaving in 1996, and performed on such staples

as *Come Dancing*, *State Of Confusion*, *Better Things*, *Don't Forget To Dance*, *Destroyer*, *Living On A Thin Line* and *Do It Again*.

Sir Ray remembered Gibbons's audition for the band: "He only played a few chords before I knew he was the right guy, with the



voicing, to musically slot in between the other members of the band, and with The Kinks that took some doing."

Dave Davies described Gibbons as "a great professional [with] a positive attitude to being on the road and recording", while Avory rued: "It's so sad he had to go so quickly before anyone could say goodbye."

As well as spells with the Nashville Teens and the Love Affair, Gibbons also played with artists including Ian Hunter, Sweet, Suzi Quatro, Roger Chapman, Ken Hensley, Samson, Dr Feelgood, Randy California, Chris Farlowe and Maggie Bell. **DL**



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# Nick Mason Named 2019 Prog God

Drummer receives top award.

**NICK MASON HAS** been named this year's Prog God, and will receive the prestigious award at the 2019 Progressive Music Awards at the Underglobe Theatre in London on September 12. Outside of his work with Pink Floyd, the drummer (the only member of Floyd to appear on all their albums), who received a CBE in the 2019 New Year's Honours list, has produced albums for Robert Wyatt, Gong and Steve Hillage, and enjoyed a number of side-projects. Most recently, his group Nick Mason's Saucerful Of Secrets, formed last year, have gone from strength to strength.

Previous recipients of the Prog God award include Rick Wakeman (2012), Ian Anderson ('13), Peter Gabriel ('14), Tony Banks ('15) and Jon Anderson ('16).

"I'm all in favour of recognition for drummers – particularly when it's me – so I'm really delighted to be recognised as Prog God," Mason tells *Prog* magazine, a sister title of *Classic Rock*. "It's hard to believe that it was over fifty years ago that the music that we know as prog rock was born, and it's still being celebrated, played and developed. Long may it continue." **DL**



Nick Mason:  
Prog God 2019.

## New Ozzy Songs On The Way

Singer wrote material while recuperating from illness.

**OZZY OSBOURNE HAS** come up with nine song ideas for a new album while attempting to stabilise severe health issues that caused the postponement of part of his No More Tours 2 tour – now rescheduled to resume in January 2020 and with Judas Priest retained as Special Guests.

The singer joked to *Rolling Stone* that the album could be titled *Recuperation*, but the 70-year-old still has a long way to go before being able to return to the stage.

"I don't think I can do a rock concert right now. I'll go: 'Hello', and that's it," he said, admitting: "The progress is so fucking slow. [But] we're keeping our fingers crossed."

Meanwhile, a limited-edition boxed set featuring all 10 of Ozzy's solo albums, plus additional live tracks, all presented on vinyl, is due later this year. The 173-track package, titled *See You On The Other Side*, is released on November 29 via Sony Legacy. **DL**



## NEWS

Rob Halford refuses to rule out the return of KK Downing during next year's 50th anniversary of **Judas Priest**. Although relations with original guitarist Tipton have been strained since his exit eight years ago, the singer admits: "It is such an emotionally charged question [but] what will happen will happen. I don't want to send mixed messages."

**Gary Rossington** is "healing and feeling better" after a minor heart correction that caused Lynyrd Skynyrd to reschedule two appearances on their farewell tour.

**The Magpie Salute**, featuring former Black Crowes members Rich Robinson, Marc Ford and Sven Pipien, return with a new album, *High Water II*, on October 18 via Provogue.

An exhibition celebrating **The Clash's** third album, *London Calling*, opens on November 15 and runs until next spring at the Museum Of London. It collates more than 100 items from the band's archive, including draft lyrics, stage clothes and photos. Admission is free.



Iron Maiden's Steve Harris (pictured) reveals that a second album from his other group **British Lion** will be ready before the end of the year. Two of its tracks, *Spitfire* and *Bible Black*, have been performed live.

In other Maiden news, guitarist Adrian Smith publishes a fishing book called *Monsters Of River And Rock: My Life As Iron Maiden's Compulsive Angler*, in May 2020.



## Korn

Guitarist James 'Munky' Shaffer didn't even expect to be alive now, let alone return with a great new album.

**BACK WITH THEIR** thirteenth studio album, *The Nothing*, Korn are sounding bombastic, sharp and very, very heavy. A concept record partly inspired by the emotional fallout after the death of frontman Jonathan Davis's estranged wife in 2018, it's one of the darkest things the band have ever recorded but, weirdly, also one of the most immediate and succinct records of their lengthy career. Guitarist James 'Munky' Shaffer attributes this fresh creative splurge to the talents of his singer and the strength of their friendship.

**The Nothing sounds absolutely huge. What's your secret?**

You listen to what you did before, and you want to try to better it in any way that you can. We looked at some of our previous albums, and our

producer, Nick Raskulinecz, listened to the whole catalogue and picked out his favourite parts. He wanted to make an album – sonically and musically – from his favourite parts from what we do.

**Given last year's tragic events, was this always going to be a heavy and dark record?**

That was the intention going into it. We wanted to create interludes. Jonathan had a really hard year, and as he was going through a lot of those unfortunate events we were in the studio. We stopped working for a little bit because of the magnitude of what had happened with him and his wife. It was a tough time for everybody. But we really needed to paint this picture for him, so he'd feel comfortable to release that experience. It became a bigger thing than we expected, concept-wise.

**It starts with the sound of bagpipes and Jonathan crying. Presumably the recording sessions were difficult.**

Yeah, it was hard. He's obviously the last person to come in, to put his vocals on everything. There was some worry that maybe he wasn't ready. I was like: "No, I know he's gonna step up and deliver." But we were up against deadlines, and that really pushed him to get a lot of that frustration out. I think it really lent itself to him delivering amazing performances.

**You must know each so well. Can you still surprise each other?**

We're such good friends at this age. We're brothers, really. But we surprise each other, every night on stage. We always find new things. It keeps things fun. It keeps things exciting, especially when you've been doing this for twenty-five years. At the rate we were partying, I didn't even think I was going to be alive at this point, man [laughs].

**What does 'The Nothing' mean to you?**

For me it represents that big negativity that can creep into your life or anything you're doing. It's those voices in your head that tell you that you can't do something or you're not good enough. It's that negative voice keeping you from doing what you love and from having the best life you can have.

**How's Jonathan doing now, as you approach more big tours?**

Touring can be tough, especially when you have families at home. Things at home get weird and there's drama, and unfortunately there's not much you can do except lend your ear and be there for one another. This is our family out here. When we're away from home, we're here for each other through good and bad. **DL**

*The Nothing is out on September 13 via Roadrunner Records/Elektra.*



“The rest of the band could be trying to sing a Kylie song, and with my voice it’d still sound like bluesy rock!”



★ HIGH HOPES

# The Black Hands

Meet the Chesterfield blues rockers on the lookout for a smoky pub playing Free and Zep.

WHEN THE BLACK Hands were considering where to shoot a photo for the cover of their debut album, you’d like to think they saw this place and said, “Bingo!” The cover of said debut, *Electric Premier Theatre*, finds the Chesterfield four-piece standing beneath a giant faded sign on the side of a building of the same name. “It’s an old bingo hall [see what we did there?] near where our guitarist lives,” explains singer Andy Gannon. “We always said to each other, if we ever do an album, that’s got to be the cover.”

It certainly fits neatly with the beautifully weathered, vintage blues rock sound that they’ve created. “We like to imagine ourselves being back in the seventies, listening to Free or Led Zep, everyone smoking in a packed boozier, with one lager and one bitter available. That kind of pub scene is where we’ve come from.”

Although the album quickly follows a clutch of self-released singles, they originally formed back in 2010 as a six-piece, and released their first EP the following year. Despite radio play and BBC Introducing interest, though, “life got in the way”, as Gannon puts it. “A couple of members left, and then there were marriages, moving home... and a few personal issues.”

Through a long studio hiatus, the remaining quartet, still including bassist Joe Hayes and drummer Ben Atkins, kept

rehearsing, with guitarist Daniel Riley’s talent for writing punchy riffs and some neat hooks anchoring an increasingly impressive repertoire. The results include sorrow-drowning stompers *God Loves A Trier* (*But He Don’t Love Me*) and *Grape & The Grain*, which suggests a few wince-inducing hangovers. But the startling performance on the latter was the result of a more serious life event. “We recorded that song the day after my father passed away, and I just gave it everything I had,” says Gannon. But once the bulk of the song was finished, they felt it needed something else. A bridge, perhaps, an instrumental break... some divine intervention.

“We were discussing what to add to it,” says the singer, “and then Ben, whose dad is actually a church minister, said his dad had shown him a video of a preacher on YouTube.”

They duly sampled (with permission) the gospel speech, and it adds the kind of neat touch that also sets The Black Hands apart elsewhere on the album, thanks to additions like the mandolin on *Experienced Blues Pt 1* and echoing lap steel on *Straight And Narrow*.

Their desire to get the right rootsy sound led to experiments like recording a vocal of the latter track in shower blocks in an old football changing room. Gannon says they also “did a version of *High Times* in a barn. You could hear the birds in the roof.”

They hope to follow up *Electric Premier Theatre* some time next year. And if anyone’s got a smoky pub for hire, perfectly preserved since 1974, I’m sure they’d be interested in a residency. **JS**

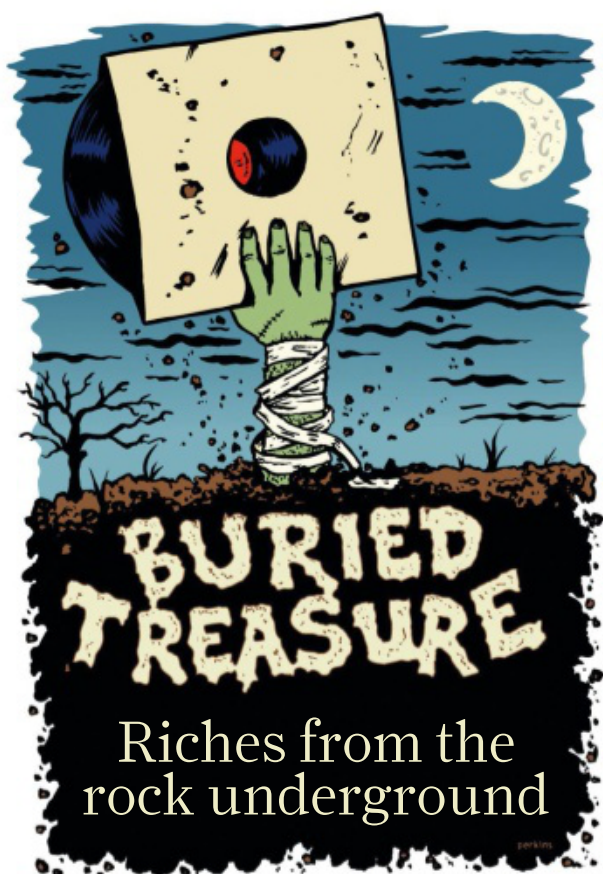
*Electric Premier Theatre* is out now (self-released).

## FOR FANS OF...



“Two bands we love are Led Zep and Free, but we never set out to be a rock band. Trouble is, the rest of the band could be trying to sing a Kylie song, and with my voice it’s still going to sound like bluesy rock! We’d heard of ideas like *When The Levee Breaks* being recorded in a giant staircase, so we thought we’d experiment too.”





## HIGH SPEED AND THE AFFLICTED MAN

*Get Stoned, Ezy, Bonk Records, UK, 1982. £125.*



*Get Stoned Ezy* is no ordinary album. The project was one of several spin-offs from London-based late-70s underground punks Afflicted. Much like Sham 69, Afflicted

had, for whatever reason, garnered a very unsavoury right-wing following. This began to plague them and, as a result, they stopped performing live.

Band leader Steve Hall was a striking guitarist, and his squatting lifestyle, solvent abuse and heroin addiction certainly added a dose of grime to his musical approach, even more so in relation to this album. His acid-drenched solos, soaked in reverb, fuzz and wah-wah often reach levels of sensory overload.

*Get Stoned Ezy* is psychedelic rock for noise addicts and comes with the disclaimer: "WARNING: THIS RECORD

## 'Get Stoned Ezy is psychedelic rock for noise addicts.'

IS VERY POWERFUL AND COULD GIVE YOU EARHOLE DAMAGE".

Recorded live to four-track – and almost certainly under influence – it's kind of how Pink Fairies should have sounded on record. Of its three lengthy tracks, *Zip Ead* and *Sun Sun* are lysergic garage jams, pre-dating the likes of UK psych revisionists Loop, Spacemen 3, Bevis Frond etc by several years.

This is by no means an album for those who like their rock music tight and nicely produced. It is, however, a perfect mix of dirgy punk embracing the looser, free-thinking jams of the 60s at a time in the early 80s where it didn't really have a place to sit. **LD**



**Eddie Money**, who cancelled his summer US tour after developing pneumonia while recovering from a recent heart valve surgery, has been diagnosed with stage 4 oesophageal cancer. The 70-year-old intends to continue touring while receiving treatment.

Currently celebrating their 50th anniversary with a tour that visits London's Royal Albert Hall, **Hawkwind** release a new studio album, *All Aboard The Skylark*, on October 25 via Cherry Red. It's the group's 32nd studio release.

In an unexpected move, Glenn Hughes has joined **The Dead Daisies**, taking the places of frontman John Corabi and bassist Marco Mendoza. "Both John and Marco are, and always will be, a part of the Dead Daisies musical family," says a statement from the group, "but at this point in time they have decided to do some work on their own solo projects." The revised line-up plan to return to the road with a new album in 2020.



**The Down 'N' Outz**, fronted by Def Leppard's Joe Elliott (pictured) in partnership with members of the Quireboys and Vixen, release their third studio album, *This Is How We Roll*, on October 11 via UMC.

US alt.country band Wilco play three British dates this month: Glasgow Barrowland September 26, Manchester Albert Hall 27, London Hammersmith Apollo 28.



## The Defiants

The 80s/90s melodic hard rockers on latter-day success, songwriting and the perils of steroids with Jack Daniel's.

**GIVEN THAT BASSIST** Bruno Ravel and guitarist Rob Marcello remain current members of the US hair-metallers Danger Danger, and that singer Paul Laine had two spells fronting the same group, similarities between The Defiants and Danger Danger were inevitable. Ravel and Laine discuss The Defiants' second album, *Zokusho* (it's Japanese for 'sequel'), which looks set to feature among the year's 'best of AOR' lists.

**Classic Rock named The Defiants' self-titled debut the melodic hard rock album of 2016. Did its critical success surprise you?**

**Bruno Ravel:** I had kind of expected diehard Danger fans from the Paul Laine era to like it, but overall it exceeded any hopes that we might have had. We were pretty overwhelmed by it.

**Coming from a time when rock records were immensely profitable, why do you continue to make music in this day and age?**

**BR:** We do it for different reasons now. Performing on stage is great, but I really love to write and create, to throw something out into the ether and get a response.

**Can you talk us through the mechanics of a Defiants song being written?**

**Paul Laine:** Typically, Bruno sends me a riff and a drum beat. I sing the first melody and lyrics that come into my head for the verse and chorus, and after many phone calls we have a song.

**Is that different to Danger Danger's way of doing it?**

**BR:** Yeah. Paul and I have more freedom, whereas writing in Danger Danger, if Steve [West, drums] and I disagree over

an idea, the song gets thrown out. With The Defiants we don't get as critical and it doesn't make us anywhere near as tense.

**Just to be clear, do DD still exist?**

**BR:** Danger Danger will always play live, but there are so many obstacles in making records. I'm still up for that, but Steve believes that the way the business has gone, there's no longer a point. When I asked him to do so he enjoyed playing on this record [as a guest], but that was just a fun thing.

**"Performing on stage is great, but I really love to write and create."**

**You still write about important things in life – drinking, cars, staying up late, heartbreak.**

**Philosophers need not apply.**

**PL:** It's rock'n'roll, baby. Sometimes in this increasingly

boring PC world, fewer fucks need to be given. I miss that in rock'n'roll.

**BR:** Those elements you just mentioned are the key ingredients of our genre. Why mess with a winning combination?

**The debut was promoted by a highly rock'n'roll gig at the Rockingham Festival in Nottingham which saw Paul drunkenly throw a bottle of Jack Daniel's across the stage.**

**PL:** I have scar tissue on my lungs from having pneumonia as a child, so I take a steroid based inhaler about a half-hour before the show. At Rockingham I also took some belts of Jack Daniel's, and felt it all hit just as I walked on to the stage. Oops. That night's performance was dedicated to Keith Moon.

**What are the chances of a return visit to the UK?**

**PL:** I'm pretty sure that's going to happen. We've been in talks about it. **DL**

*Zokusho is out now via Frontiers Records.*



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# MY FIRST LOVE

*Etta James*

BLUES IN THE NIGHT, VOL. 1: THE EARLY SHOW

By Beth Hart

The rock'n'soul songstress on the power of Etta.



"When I was a teenager, every summer I'd go to Lake Tahoe with my best friend Ron. It was a long drive. I had a Big Joe Turner tape I kept playing, until Ron finally got sick of it and said: 'You need to listen to this.' He put on *Blues*

*In The Night*, and it sent shivers down my spine like music never had before.

"I'd listened to all sorts of genres growing up, but there was something here about the songs, the musicians [Red Holloway, Eddie Vinson, Shuggie Otis, Jack McDuff], and Etta's unbelievable voice. She's in front of, like, fifty people at a supper club [Marla's Memory Lane in LA] and she's fricking amazing. They do a medley of *At Last*, *Trust Me* and *Sunday Kind Of Love*, and I love the way Etta phrases, there's such feeling to it. She had all this technique, but that was secondary to her. She's in her late forties here, and you can hear how much she'd grown. I bought her earlier stuff but it sounded like she had a white producer trying to get her on white radio. But on this you know she's doing what she loves to do.

"I studied this record for years, put it on over and over, all day long... and I still can't get enough of it." **GM**

*Beth Hart's War In My Mind is out on September 27 via Provogue/Mascot.*



## NEWS

A documentary on the career of **Suzi Quatro** is set for general release on October 11, the Liam Firmager-directed *Suzi Q* follows the 53-year career of the glam-rock trailblazer and includes interviews with Joan Jett, Debbie Harry, Lita Ford, Cherie Currie, Tina Weymouth, Donita Sparks and Alice Cooper.

Former Bauhaus frontman **Peter Murphy** has thanked healthcare staff for helping him make a "full recovery" following a heart attack shortly before a concert in New York City.

The seventh annual music/literary event **Louder Than Words** takes place at the Principal Hotel in Manchester over the weekend of November 8-10. Thurston Moore (Sonic Youth), Wayne Hussey (Sisters Of Mercy/The Mission) and Edwyn Collins are among its planned guest stars. For full details visit [louderthanwordsfest.com](http://louderthanwordsfest.com)



A long-lost duet between **Lemmy** (pictured) and Americana artist **Lynda Kay** appears on a newly issued double album from Kay called *Black & Gold*. Lemmy began writing *The Mask* in 1979 and completed it with Kay in 2009, six years before his death.

**The Prodigy** are working on new music five months after the death of their vocalist Keith Flint. "Back in the studio making noise... brand new Prodigy tunes are gonna roll," writes keyboard player Liam Howlett.



WELCOME BACK

## Samantha Fish

The US roots-rocker on broken bones, shaking off the fish jokes and giving the finger to the doubters.

**SAMANTHA FISH** IS not in Kansas anymore. The 30-year-old gunslinger might have come up on the Midwest circuit, but since then she's taken her studio catalogue all over the map, from the Mississippi and Chicago blues flavours of early albums like 2011's *Runaway* to the Nashville tones of 2017's *Belle Of The West*. It's a US road trip that continues with this year's *Kill Or Be Kind*, tracked in Memphis, taking in everything from spring-heeled soul to brass-bolstered country rock.

**Kill Or Be Kind** salutes all the great American genres. What's been the early reaction?

So far it's nice to hear that people are digging it. You're always just taking a shot, trying to evolve and hoping they'll come with you. The world can be fickle. People can love you today, not love you tomorrow.

**Any favourite memories from the album sessions?**

We went back to Royal Studios in Memphis, where I recorded part of [2015's] *Wild Heart*. I just feel a real soul connection to that town. There's Memphis all over that album. It seeps in somehow. When you go into Royal, it's like, you're singing into Al Green's microphone, playing with Ann Peebles's drum machine from *I Can't Stand The Rain*...

**Can you tell us what some of the songs are about?**

Well, I think the title track is an interesting assessment of how quickly love turns to hate, the duality of that emotion. Like, say you're on your way out of a relationship – you can either rip the other person to shreds, or just move on in a kind way. The verses of that song are insults, like, 'You used to be great but you're not any more.' *Bulletproof* is kind of

a social commentary about being in the music industry. People criticise and you're sort of expected to have this bullet-proof exterior. *Love Letters* is a really sad and desperate love song; you're drowning in your own feelings, basically.

**You really hit the guitar at points on this album. Ever made your hands bleed?**

Oh, hell yeah. You get the wrong kind of manicure and before you know it your nails are falling off, y'know? I thought I broke my hand last week. I was being an

asshole, trying to get some feedback out and punching my guitar. But I'm more careful now with my hands, my arms, my fingers. I used to be a little daredevil. Now, someone will ask me: "You want to go skiing?" and I'm like:

"Definitely not." I can't afford to break an arm – or anything – at this point.

**Did people ever underestimate you on your way up?**

Yeah. I think we're all underestimated as we're coming up. You'd get that a lot. People can be snarky and shitty. They'd say: "Oh, you're just here because you're a girl. You'll be gone in a couple of years." But you just gotta fuckin' ignore it, move forward, find people that do believe in you, work with them, and fuck the rest.

**Do you get sick of all the fish-pun headlines in magazines?**

Well, they've laid off the fish jokes in the last couple of years, which is cool. I don't think I get it as bad as Walter Trout. He actually made an album called *No More Fish Jokes*, so I guess he'd kinda hit his threshold, too, huh? **HY**

*Kill Or Be Kind is out on September 20 via Rounder. Samantha Fish tours the UK in February and March 2020.*



# Bones UK

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# Lynyrd Skynyrd

## Free Bird

A song that Ronnie Van Zant said had too many chord changes to write lyrics for, and that both band and their label thought was too long to be a single, it became a rock classic.

Words: **Dave Everley**

Few songs have defined a band or a genre quite as much as *Free Bird*. Lynyrd Skynyrd's ode to the freedom of the road and the people it leaves behind wasn't their biggest hit chart-wise – *Sweet Home Alabama* and *That Smell* both outdid it in the *Billboard* chart – but it became their passport to immortality and the unofficial anthem of the southern rock nation.

"It's about what it means to be free, in that a bird can fly wherever he wants to go," Ronnie Van Zant said in the 70s. "Everyone wants to be free. That's what this country's all about."

The roots of Skynyrd had been sown in 1964, when singer Ronnie Van Zant, guitarists Allen Collins and Gary Rossington and original drummer Bob Burns had met at a baseball game in Jacksonville and decided to form a band. By the end of the decade, they'd christened themselves Lynyrd Skynyrd, after a hated high-school sports teacher.

Ronnie Van Zant was the unelected leader of the band, although Rossington and Collins soon formed their own partnership. "Me and Allen played all the time," says Rossington, the sole surviving original Skynyrd member today. "Even when we weren't practising with the band, we would play together at his house."

One day, Collins arrived at the stiflingly hot tin-roofed shack nicknamed the Hell House that the band used as their rehearsal room with the skeleton of a song he'd come up with.

"That was one of the first things he'd ever wrote," says Rossington. "He'd only done maybe two or three things before that."

Collins played it to his fellow guitarist, who told him it was great. Ronnie Van Zant, however, was less convinced. "Ronnie thought there were too many chord changes," says Rossington. "He said: 'I can't write lyrics to this, there's too much happening.' He just couldn't get it. He didn't hear nothing."

The famously intractable singer refused to budge, but that didn't stop Collins and Rossington from continually practising the

song. Eventually their accidental war of attrition paid off.

"One day, Ronnie went: 'Okay, play it again.' He made Allen play it a bunch of different times. And finally he got a verse or a melody in his head. And he started practising that, playing Allen's chords. He wrote the lyrics just laying on the couch."

Ironically, Rossington says that the band initially saw *Free Bird* as just another song. "We didn't even think much of it at first," he says. But they swiftly realised they'd hit on something special the very first time the band played it live.

"It was at a place called the South Side Women's Club in Jacksonville," he recalls. "We played that song, but just the slow part. We didn't have the jam at the end then. We ended it before the guitars came in, but everybody still got off on it. They clapped us so much."

A demo of the song recorded in 1970 and included in the band's 1991 box set lasts just four minutes. That's how *Free Bird* sounded for a while. The band would play the first half of the song, fuelled by Ronnie's sorrowful vocals, wrapping it up after four or five minutes. But Collins and Rossington gradually started to add a short guitar outro.

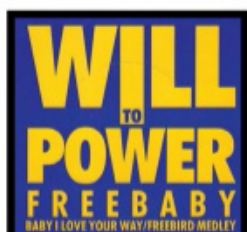
"Just a minute or so," says Rossington. "But one night we were playing a club and Ronnie said: 'Play that a little longer, my voice is hurting, I need a break. So we played two minutes or three minutes. Then two days later his throat was all sore and he could hardly talk, and we ended up playing it ten minutes at the end, just jamming.'"

Collins and Rossington tightened up the outro and pianist Billy Powell added a mournful intro before the band went into the fabled Muscle Shoals studio in Alabama in 1973 to record what was supposed to be their first album. Future Blackfoot frontman (and latter-day

Skynyrd guitarist) Rickey Medlocke was their drummer at the time.

"I remember sitting in the Hell House, watching those guys playing it, and even then I knew it was something special," says Medlocke. "People always ask me: 'What's the hardest song to learn when you rejoined the band? Is it *Free Bird*?' And I go: 'No, I knew all the licks in that song cos I was playing drums in Muscle Shoals when we cut the original version.'"

The Muscle Shoals album would remain unreleased until 1978. But the band revisited the song for their debut album proper, *Pronounced 'Leh-'nérd 'Skin-'nérd*, with producer Al Kooper. By then they were



### FREE BIRD GOES ELECTRONIC

*Free Bird* is Lynyrd Skynyrd's most famous song, but they didn't have the biggest hit with it. Strictly speaking, that honour goes to flash-in-the-pan dance-pop outfit *Will To Power*, who released a chintzy electronic mash-up of the Skynyrd classic and Peter Frampton's equally iconic *Baby I Love Your Way*. Titled *Baby I Love Your Way/Free Bird Medley*, it reached No.1 in the US in 1988; Skynyrd only managed No.19 in the US and No.21 in the UK.

*Will To Power* scraped one more hit, with a cover of 10CC's *I'm Not In Love*, before thankfully disappearing down the garbage chute of history.





Skynd's Ronnie Van Zant, Gary Rossington and Allen Collins with producer Al Kooper recording their debut album *Pronounced 'Leh-'nérd 'Skin-'nérd* in May 1973.

#### THE FACTS

##### RELEASE DATE

November 1973

##### HIGHEST CHART POSITION

UK No.21, US No.19

##### PERSONNEL

Ronnie Van Zant  
Vocals

Gary Rossington  
Guitar

Allen Collins  
Guitar

Billy Powell  
Piano

Ed King  
Bass

Bob Burns  
Drums

Al Kooper  
Organ, Mellotron

##### WRITTEN BY

Allen Collins,  
Ronnie Van Zant

PRODUCED BY  
Al Kooper

LABEL  
MCA

a well-drilled unit, with Ronnie Van Zant cracking the whip hard. *Free Bird* had stretched out to nine glorious minutes.

"The thing Ronnie did that was different from other bands was that he wanted that band to sound the same every night," Kooper said later. "He was not interested in improvisation at all. Every bit of *Free Bird* was planned out before I came into the

picture. Every guitar solo was played exactly the same. I have never met a band that did that. It was pretty amazing."

Skynyrd's label, MCA, were reluctant to put it out as a single. "They thought it was too long to be a hit," says Rossington. "Mind you, so did we." But the song took on a life of its own on stage, and the record company changed their mind. *Free Bird* was

eventually a hit in 1974, more than a year after it was originally released.

Today, more than 40 years after Ronnie Van Zant died in a plane crash, and almost 30 years since the song's original author Allen Collins died in a car crash, *Free Bird* remains Lynyrd Skynyrd's signature track and one of the cornerstones of the classic-rock canon. Even now, rolling down the road has never sounded so romantic.

"Jeez, most of our songs are about rolling down the road," Rossington says with a laugh. "*Sweet Home Alabama*, *What's Your Name?*, *Whiskey Rock-A-Roller*, *Travelling Man*. But I guess *Free Bird* is the ultimate one, and that's why it stuck." 🗣️

**"It's about what it means to be free, in that a bird can fly wherever he wants to go. Everyone wants to be free."**



# Iggy Pop

*The 'Godfather of Punk' talks success, pride, playing shows, and his upcoming film appearance as a guts-eating zombie.*

Words: **Marcel Anders**

**I**ggy Pop isn't someone to rest on his laurels. Now enviably lithe at the age of 72, with a recording career that stretches back 50 years, the proto-punk pioneer-turned-global icon is still as keen as ever to challenge himself.

Following on from 2016's *Post-Pop Depression*, his widely acclaimed collaboration with Josh Homme, Iggy's new album, *Free*, featuring key players including jazz trumpeter/producer Leron Thomas and avant-garde guitarist Noveller (aka Sarah Lipstate), marks yet another compelling change of gear. "And everything you hear on those tracks, except for Leron's horn solo on one of them, is all done with a Stratocaster and a bunch of effects," he says of the new record. "And she [Noveller] can do it exactly like that live, all alone with her guitar. She's brilliant."

**The new album, *Free*, will surprise anyone who's expecting another *Post-Pop Depression* from you. Was that the plan?**

Yeah, that's right. I'm really not a big: "I want success" kind of guy. I have my own standards, and I just don't really care very much about all that. Once in a while I have to go into that world and just prove that I can and get people off of my back, but that's not really where I belong, you know?

**Were you surprised by the success of *Post-Pop Depression*, which was your highest charting album ever.**

No, I wasn't surprised, as it got going, because the other people were so highly competent. You know, Josh Homme and Dean Fertita and Matt Helders are just really, really top guys. That was my core band on that. I didn't know at first that that one was going to go in that direction. In other words, I approached Josh about doing a record, and I imagined that he would probably come up with a few blues riffs like *Desert Sessions* or something, and I'd go out there for a weekend and that would be that, you know? But he really wanted to do it up. So, once I realised that, then I thought: "Well, let's go for it." And that was a beautiful thing. But I'd be a fool personally, to myself, to try to do that sort of thing over and over and over.

**Does that mean you're done with rock music?**

No.

**But jazz and avant garde are styles you've flirted with before, so this is not really a brand new playground for you.**

Yeah, yeah, sure... I wanted to do something outside of, above and beyond, the rock format. And I did in a certain way with *Post-Pop Depression*, because it's not really a rock album, but it still used guys who are in what's considered rock bands, and there's a back beat and a drum kit and guitars. And it did so much for me. It was really during the period of recording, releasing, and then especially touring with Josh Homme, that I finally got over. I was doing quite well before I worked with him, but those two years really put me over.

**How do you mean?**

Meaning I had total success, and now I can do whatever I want [laughs]. So everybody can fuck off. That's the way I am. If you

don't like it... you know. But I think I'm very confident and proud of the music I've made, and I think there are certain people that I'm going to touch with this music. And that's always what I was in it for, you know?

**Do you still enjoy being on stage?**

Yes, I do. I very much enjoy it.

**Being in your seventies now, how do you still do shows, still keep on touring?**

Well, I don't do too much of it, for one thing. I try to limit them. I don't go out there any more and do forty... Except for that one year with Josh. I went out with Josh and then I went out myself with my band. So that year I did fifty-two shows. But most years I'm doing, like... this year it'll be thirteen shows. And I've just turned down a lot of work. I only did six last year. But I fell off a stage in Montreux, and had to go to a fancy Swiss dentist to get patched up for that. So it seems these things find me even if I try to cool it.

**Is there any chance you're going to perform the whole of the *Free* album live – at least for a one-off?**

Yeah, absolutely. We plan to do the whole motherfucker. Probably not for a paying public, but we're planning to perform it privately at least once in Europe and once in America. And then who knows? Later on I have a very strong rock ensemble, and a really good set that I do from songs that I want to hear and people want to hear from everything I've done. But also I now get a lot of invitations from jazz and classical festivals – lots. And I'm interested. So I'll see how it goes, and I might take this out to some of those things. You know, why not?

**I've got to see the new Jim Jarmusch film, *The Dead Don't Die*, which you appear in. What was it like to play a zombie?**

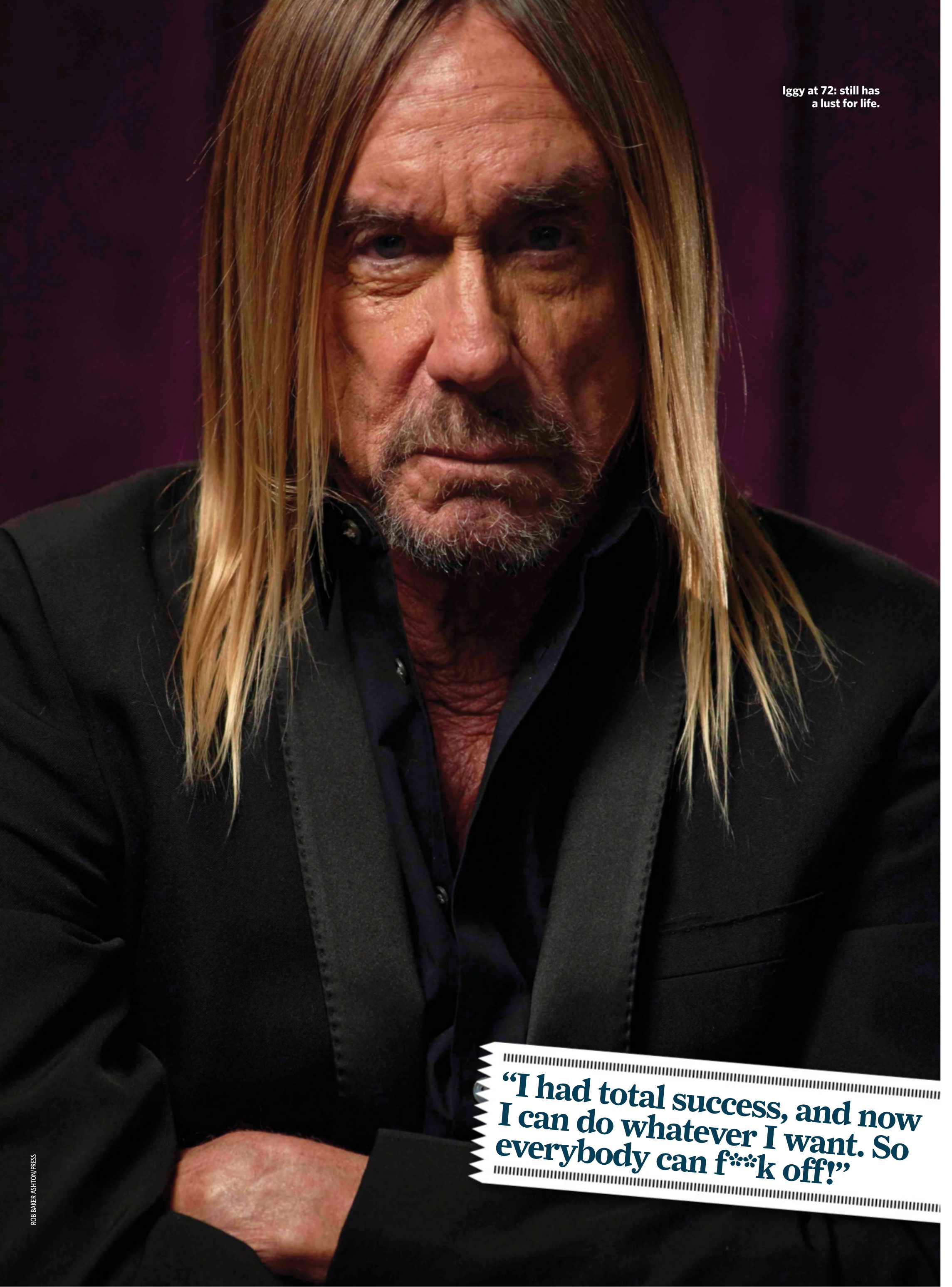
Well, it was really fucking hard, man. Just fucking tons of make-up, people squirting blood into my mouth between every scene, and I had to bend down and eat somebody's guts. And the first time I did that they said: "Okay, there's two choices: you can have organic pork sausage [laughs], or this silicone fake sausage filled with kind of nasty tasting chemicals." Like salad wraps, like at a salad bar. So I went for the salad bar, and I almost threw up the first time. It was really revolting. But I had to do it. I mean, he did that great movie about my band [2016 documentary *Gimme Danger*] and put me in other movies, so he was my guru for the movies [laughs]. I had to do whatever he asked. He wanted me to be a zombie, I want to be a zombie, you know?

**Do you get your head chopped off?**

No, Sara [Driver] and I are two of the few zombies that never get... you never see me killed in the thing. No, I didn't lose my head. He said: "We can't kill you, man" [laughs]. So, I was happy about that. 🧟

*Free is out now via Loma Vista/Caroline International.*





Iggy at 72: still has  
a lust for life.

**“I had total success, and now  
I can do whatever I want. So  
everybody can f\*\*k off!”**



Whiskey Myers: Southern gents raised by wolves, and they're *not* a country band.







# Whiskey Myers

The small-town Texans have taken their brand of southern rock storytelling across the globe, and even to the world of prestige TV.

Interview: **David Sinclair**

**AUTHENTICITY: YOU CAN'T** buy it, you can't bluff it. And you can't beat it when it comes to delivering dirty, down-home, electric guitar music from the American south. Whiskey Myers have been keeping it real since the band got together in 2007. Channelling a musical heritage that stretches from Lynyrd Skynyrd to Waylon Jennings, they painstakingly built a following, song by song, gig by gig. Their enduring passion and commitment to their regional roots continues to shine through on their fifth album, a magnificent compendium of southern rock storytelling simply titled *Whiskey Myers*.

**They come from deep in the heart of Texas.**

The original members come from "a bunch of small towns" in Anderson County including Palestine (population 18,712), Grapeland (1,857), Slocum (198) and Neches (178).

"We all grew up together since we were kids," says lead guitarist John Jeffers.

"You don't do a lot around Palestine unless you work for Walmart or you're part of the prison system," says lead singer Cody Cannon. "All of my family work in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice."

**They are real southern men.**

Whiskey Myers' breakthrough hit *Ballad Of A Southern Man* (from their 2011 album *Firewater*) gave an unapologetic account of the backwoods lifestyle: 'I still fly that Southern flag, whistling Dixie loud enough to brag...'

"There's nothing wrong with being proud of where you're from," Cannon says. "Some songs are autobiographical when it's called for, some are fictional. But they're all true to things that you see around you. It's true about your life, or of someone else's life going on that you can see."

**They've had three albums in the US country chart, but don't call them a country band.**

"We're not necessarily a country band or a rock band or a red dirt band or an anything band," Jeffers says, a little wearily. "We don't like to be pigeonholed. We've been doing our own thing for twelve years. But as long as people buy a ticket

and come to the show, they can call us what the hell they want."

**They played – and acted – in *Yellowstone* with Kevin Costner.**

Whiskey Myers were filmed performing in a bar as part of a storyline for the top-rated US TV series *Yellowstone*. When the first episode was screened, in July 2018, nearly two million viewers crashed the internet looking for music by the band, and their last album, *Mud*, went straight to No.1 on the iTunes country chart the following week.

"I'd say it was life-changing for us," Cannon says. "Our platform before that was just playing shows. We never had any major radio play or record deals, so we never had the opportunity to get in front of that many people. It was good being part of the experience and getting to be behind the scenes. You see how they do stuff."

**They opened for the Rolling Stones.**

Whiskey Myers have opened for Lynyrd Skynyrd and ZZ Top, and played to huge crowds at Download festivals in Donington and Paris, but nothing beats opening for the Rolling Stones at Soldier Field in Chicago in June this summer.

"They're one of our favourite bands of all time," Cannon says. "We all look up to them."

Did you tell Mick Jagger about the lyric to the new Whiskey Myers song *Die Rockin* ('I felt a woman's breast and heard Sway by the Stones')?

"No, I kept quiet about that. It was more 'Yes sir, no sir.' Just the fact they took the time to meet us and take a picture was good enough for me."

**They were raised by wolves.**

'I was raised by the wolves in the woods, not the streets,' Cannon sings in *Glitter Ain't Gold*.

"It's kinda hard to explain," Jeffers says.

"There's no bullshit and you practise what you preach. It's just the way we were raised."

"Have you seen *The Jungle Book*?" Cannon asks. "I grew up howling." 🐾

*Whiskey Myers is out on September 27 via Snakefarm Records.*



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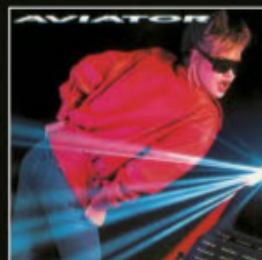
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GODDO - 'AN ACT OF GODDO'



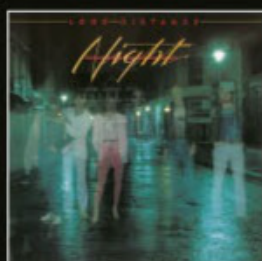
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THE SCREAM - 'LET IT SCREAM'



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NIGHT - 'LONG DISTANCE'



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# ★CLASSIC★ **Rock**

**PRESENTS**

# 50

**YEARS OF**

# HEAVY METAL

In the summer of 1969, an upcoming Brummie band (previously called Earth) played their first gig under the name Black Sabbath. It was the start of heavy metal as we know it. Fifty years on, we look back at the shit-kicking, amp-blowing bands that built the genre – and chart its history in 50 songs with our Ultimate Heavy Metal Playlist.





# IN THE BEGINNING...

As Earth they were going nowhere. Then they chanced on three notes which in the Middle Ages had been branded 'the devil's interval', changed their name to **Black Sabbath** and changed everything.

Words: **Mick Wall**

**T**hey were scum and they knew it. Human debris from the shitty, bomb-cratered streets of a post-war British nowhere named Aston. Or as Ozzy Osbourne would tell you, not a trace of a smile on his melancholy jester's face: "We were four fucking dummies from Birmingham, what did we know about anything?"

It turned out they knew just enough to change the world. Those crucifixion guitar riffs, nailed in with such heavy relish, framed by storm-gathering bass and head-rattling drums, together making a sound like that of a body being dragged from a river. Those eerie singsong vocals, as dramatic and pitiful as the sound of a swan dying. Full of cobwebbed yearning, of self-harm and picked scabs and the shriek of lost souls. The three of them zombie-walking around the stage in their preposterous crosses and moustaches, while the fourth self-combusted at the back, mouldering in his own poisons, the quad combining to ensure a fifth element: the pockmarked face of the most brutally deformed style of rock ever allowed to push its way, stinking and blood-cowed, among us.

They emerged from the shattered fragments of several local Brummie bands. By the time they were ready to begin rehearsals, a sax player named Alan 'Aka' Clarke had also somehow been added to the gang, plus a second guitarist, Jimmy Philips, and they had a new moniker: the Polka Tulk Blues Band – a name filched from a shop in Handsworth, according to Geezer Butler. "It was on our way to our first gig. We passed this shop, the Polka Tulk, and I said: 'Here, that looks like a good name.'"

The Polka Tulk Blues Band lasted just two gigs: a caravan park in White Haven, and a ballroom in Carlisle. The first show ended abruptly when the audience of appalled caravaners began to get up and leave after the first number. The second show also ended badly, after a posse of local townsmen decided the band had been trying to steal their women, and set about them with bottles and chairs.

"They absolutely killed us!" Geezer recalled. The police were called and duly arrested the attackers, but not before their ringleader – "a massive, massive great big bloke!" – had strangled one of the police dogs.

Tony Iommi: "I thought, 'Oh fuck. That's it now. We're not gonna get any work'." Exit the sax player and second guitarist. "They're going. They're on their bikes," Tony announced.

The other thing to go was the name, now changed to the Earth Blues Band, a mouthful quickly shortened just to Earth. Still relying on the same musical stew of blues covers and psychedelic workouts, "doing the same song over and over, just varying the tempo a bit," as Tony put it, when he was offered the chance to replace original guitarist Mick Abrahams in Jethro Tull, and jumped at it. Then regretted it immediately.

Invited to London to begin rehearsing, Tony was so freaked out that he talked Butler into going with him. "I'd say to him: 'I don't know, Geezer, it feels funny to me.' And he'd say: 'Well, just stick with it a bit longer.' So I tried it for a few more days, and I said: 'Ah, I just can't stand it. It's not working for me'."

"At the very early part of Earth, we were still doing a lot of improvisation," Bill Ward recalled. "The first indication of what started to emerge from these improvisations," said Bill, came from their cover of a song called *The Warning*, originally by Aynsley Dunbar's Retaliation, to which Earth now added an extended guitar, bass and drums workout. This began to take on monstrous new proportions during the Star Club residency, where they were required to play four 45-minute sets a night.

"We used to have to stretch the songs out, because we'd get bored doing the same six songs or whatever," said Geezer. "For the jam after *Warning*, Tony would do this big, long solo and we'd all, like, join in, and eventually that became some of our first songs."

The first to emerge, which they gave a title to, was a bombastic rock Frankenstein they entitled *War Pigs*.

"It started out almost forty minutes long. Then we started shaping it into other songs too. Most of the songs on the first two Sabbath albums came out of those jams at the Star Club."

The defining moment that turned Earth into Black Sabbath occurred one day at rehearsals.

"I was listening to Holst at the time, *The Planets* suite," Geezer recalled, "and I loved *Mars*." He began to hum the lumbering, dramatic opening stanza. "I was playing it on my bass one day, and Tony changed it a bit, and it went from there. It just seemed to write itself."

This was more than just an accident. The distorted riff that Tony came up with may have begun in seesaw emulation of Holst's masterpiece, but the skeleton of the final riff – E, octave of E, B-flat – was based on what practitioners of the black music arts know as the triton, or diabolus musica, the most toxic interval in music, equating to half an octave, that so disturbed the church orthodoxy in the Middle Ages that it was instantly branded "the devil's interval" and outlawed throughout the land.

Tony has always claimed he knew nothing of this when he first played it on the guitar to such shattering effect that day, but admits he felt "something was moving me to play like that".

## "We were four f\*\*\*king dummies from Birmingham, what did we know about anything?"

**Ozzy Osbourne**

Travelling back to Birmingham in the van on Friday, December 13, 1968, Tony told Geezer: "Let's get back and fucking get some work done and rehearse, and let's do this ourselves, you know, and make this happen. We can become big, like Tull, but let's get cracking."

Earth picked up a manager in local music biz figure Jim Simpson, and opened for such acts as Locomotive and Bakerloo Blues Band, and occasionally headlined at places like the Bay Hotel in Sunderland, where support was provided by Van Der Graaf Generator and Radio 1 DJ John Peel.

There was even their first overseas gig, at the Brøndby Pop Klub in Denmark in February 1969, followed in August by a residency at the same Star Club in Hamburg where The Beatles had cut their teeth as live performers just a few years before.

The big career turning point came with the first fully fledged original number they came up with. Title: *Black Sabbath*.









None more Black: (l-r) Geezer Butler, Tony Iommi, Bill Ward and Ozzy Osbourne circa 1970.

The title *Black Sabbath* – which appears nowhere in the lyrics and was only added later – was lifted from the 1963 Mario Bava film of the same name, aka *Three Faces Of Fear*, starring Boris Karloff. The lyrics – one of the few Sabbath verses that Ozzy had a hand in – described a particularly ‘black’ experience Geezer had recently had at his flat late one night while lying in bed.

“I was getting into black magic and the occult at the time,” he told me. “I just, like, had a morbid interest in it. I was reading every book that came out about it. There was one called *Madness & Magic*, which was like a monthly magazine that you collected.”

Described by himself as “sort of a religious maniac when I was a kid”, Geezer had grown up collecting crucifixes, “[holy] pictures, and medals – I wanted to become a priest... I literally loved God.”

By comparison to his strict Catholic upbringing, the subject of the occult “was all really intriguing – forbidden fruit, kind of thing, and as an impressionable kid I just got interested in it”.

When, however, he awoke one night to find some sort of apparition in his room – the ‘figure in black which points at me’ of the lyric – “it frightened the bloody life out of me! I woke up suddenly, and there was this like this black shape standing at the foot of me bed. I wasn’t on drugs or anything like that, and I didn’t drink in those days. And at that

In the morning, he took down all the crosses and posters and later had the flat repainted orange. He also began wearing a cross. When, just a few days later, Tony turned Geezer’s thumb-heavy bass rendition of *Mars* into a genuinely thrilling rock epic, the lyrics he and Ozzy had made up about Geezer’s early-hours freak-out fitted perfectly. The

new song – the first the band ever wrote together from scratch – became a warning against the Satanism and devil worship they would, ironically, be accused of actually dabbling in, time and again over the years by distressed parents and their gore-thrilled offspring.

No one who heard the song’s death-rattle guitars, its lightning-forked bass and drums, its trembling vocals, ever asked for an explanation as to what it was all about. They already knew. As Geezer said, by then “all the love and peace thing had come and gone, the Vietnam War thing was happening. And a lot of kids were getting into all kinds of mysticism and occultism. It was just a really big thing at the time. Everybody was getting into it and reading up about it.”

## “Naming the band after the song *Black Sabbath* seemed to change everything for us, overnight.”

Ozzy Osbourne

time I had like this one-bedroom flat, completely painted black, and I had all these inverted crosses all around the place and all these posters of Satan and all that kind of stuff. And this shape... For some reason I thought it was the Devil himself! It was almost as if this thing was saying to me: ‘It’s time to either pledge allegiance or piss off!’ And from that moment on, I just went off the whole thing.”

# 50 YEARS OF HEAVY METAL

## A Timeline

Words: Henry Yates

**AUGUST 30, 1969**

**Black Sabbath** play their first gig. Hot on the heels of January’s souped-up power-blues debut album from **Led Zeppelin**, summer sees Birmingham band Earth rebrand as Black Sabbath, minting a malevolent and seismically heavy sound that will influence everything it touches. “I get a bit embarrassed,” Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi will reflect, “but it’s fantastic to be called the inventor of metal.”

**‘Birmingham band Earth rebrand as Black Sabbath, minting a seismically heavy sound.’**

**JUNE 3, 1970**

**Deep Purple** release *In Rock*. With incoming frontman Ian Gillan supplying a seminal metal scream, the MkII line-up overpowers Jon Lord’s orchestral whimsy with a brutal album. “We had a determination to put our stamp on what we were,” reflects Roger Glover, “which was a rock band, not a classical, pseudo-artsy progressive band.”

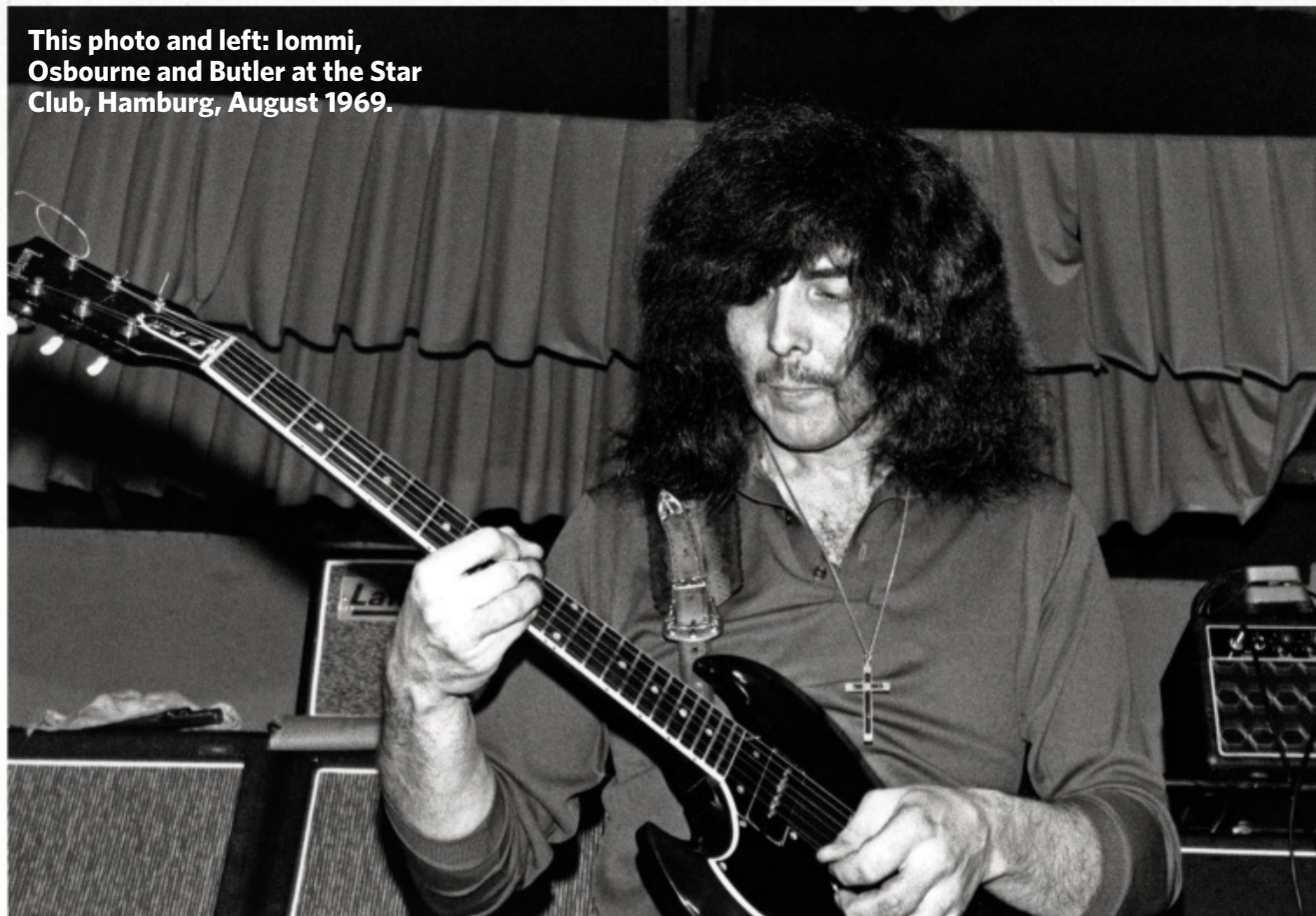
**JUNE 13, 1970**

**Alice Cooper** puts the ‘shock’ in rock.





This photo and left: Iommi, Osbourne and Butler at the Star Club, Hamburg, August 1969.



They could relate.

The clincher came later that same day they wrote the song, when they performed it live for the first time, in April 1969, at a pub in Lichfield called the Poky Hole.

"The reaction was absolutely incredible," Geezer recalled. "In those days when we played everybody would be stood at the bar drinking, not really paying attention. But we played that and everybody just stopped dead... and listened. The whole place was in a trance. We finished the song and it just erupted, they went absolutely nuts! And

we realised then that we were on to something and it was good."

They began trying to write more material in that same gloomy vein.

Geezer: "We were all totally into different things, even musically. I was into Frank Zappa and the Mothers; Ozzy was into The Beatles; Tony and Bill were into their own things too. But the one common bond we had was a love of horror films and science-fiction stuff. And that was reflected in the sort of music we would now make."

Some of their earliest attempts – like the chattering hyper-blues of *Wicked World*, from the US edition of their first album – were clearly rooted in the Earth era: maudlin repetitive rhythms enlivened by Tony's tail-flashing guitar. Some of it, though, like the embryonic *War Pigs*, which didn't surface until their second album, quickly evolved into showstoppers of an even greater magnitude. To cement their newfound direction, within weeks they had also changed the name of the band – to Black Sabbath.

"Black Sabbath was just so different to everything else," Ozzy recalled. "Naming the band after it seemed to change everything for us, overnight. I always did love that title. The only

problem was all the bloody trouble it caused with the black magic stuff."

The band made their first appearances as Black Sabbath during a return visit to the Star Club, in the summer of '69. They were a completely different band now. And not just in name.

"We were like fucking pirates by then," Ozzy cackled. "Everywhere we went, people went nuts when we showed up."

Even more people would go even more

nuts when the first, self-titled Black Sabbath album was released on Friday February 13, 1970. Even more people have continued to go even more nuts for the band ever since. Fifty years after they first wrote their anthem, the name Black Sabbath is now synonymous with the

**"A lot of kids were getting into all kinds of mysticism and occultism. It was just a really big thing at the time."**

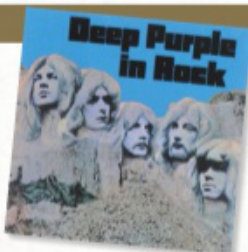
**Geezer Butler**

invention of the most enduring, consistently popular and wickedly wonderful music the rocking world has ever known.

Sludge metal, black metal, stoner rock... those down-tuned guitars, pope-on-fire vocals, bulging-vein bass and artillery-fire drums have been called many things this past half-century. But for Ozzy, at least, Sabbath's music has always been about just one thing: "Heavy fucking metal! And bollocks to all the rest." 🤘

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Creating a spidery alter-ego inspired by Bette Davis's "disgusting caked make-up" from *Whatever Happened To Baby Jane?* – and staging mock-executions – the man born Vincent Furnier brings shock-rock to Middle America at the Cincinnati Pop Festival. **Kiss** and **Twisted Sister's** Dee Snider are surely taking notes, but Cooper proves to be ahead of his time, taking a custard pie in the face.



**JULY 21, 1971**

Tony Iommi breaks the Richter Scale on *Master Of Reality*. Iommi's use of drop tunings for **Black Sabbath's** third album

was born of necessity, the guitarist having lost the tips of middle and ring fingers on his right hand to a sheet-metal cutter ("I tuned down because playing at standard pitch used to hurt"). Happy accident or otherwise, doom-metal and sludge-metal arguably

started right here, with the brutal C#-tuned grind of tracks like *Children Of The Grave*.

**JUNE 1975**

**Motörhead** are born. Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister turns drug-related ejection from Hawkwind to his advantage, forming the pioneering bastard-child power trio whose ungodly cocktail of proto-punk and speed-metal will mobilise everyone from **Metallica** to **Dave Grohl**. Even so, he rejects the tag:

"We're a rock'n'roll band. Everyone always describes us as heavy metal, even when I tell them otherwise."

**FEBRUARY 10, 1978**

**Eddie Van Halen** raises the bar with *Eruption*. Arguably the most influential one minute and forty-two seconds in guitar history, *Eruption* announces a new gold standard for metal guitar, and a band

so visceral that their summer tour supporting Black Sabbath is an exercise in giant killing. "Ozzy just completely lost it," Geezer Butler tells Mick Wall. "He thought **Van Halen** was ten times better than we were."



**JANUARY 25, 1979**

**Rob Halford** gives classic metal its wardrobe. Appearing on *Top Of The Pops* for *Take On The World*, the **Judas**





# RUNNING FREE

As the 1980s dawned, **Iron Maiden** were about to record their debut album. It was the start of a journey that would launch them into the stratosphere. But there were some massive hurdles to overcome first.

Words: **Paul Elliott**

**I**n the first days of 1980, when Iron Maiden entered Kingsway Studios in West London to begin recording their debut album, bassist Steve Harris had mixed emotions. He had a quiet confidence in the strength of the material he had written for the band and he also knew that the band's new line-up was the best it had ever been, with the addition of a hard-hitting drummer in Clive Burr, and an accomplished guitarist in Dennis Stratton to play alongside Dave Murray.

Even so, Harris had, deep down, a sense of nagging fear. "I suppose I was always worried in the back of my mind that it could all come tumbling down rather quickly," he later admitted. "You don't take anything for granted – it's the old 'here today, gone tomorrow' thing. And it's very much a business that's like that – more so than most other professions. So you try not to get yourself too worked up, in case it falls flat. That was my attitude."

For all his pragmatism, Harris was a born leader with a fierce determination to succeed and a single-minded vision for Maiden. As Dave Murray said: "Steve was the nucleus. He gave the band its identity. He was very meticulous and methodical. That's just how he was, right from the start. And it was fantastic to have that focus with Steve's songs and ideas and the way he projected them." It was that focus, and above all, those songs, that would define Iron Maiden's first album as a classic.

The plan was straightforward enough. "We'd been playing these songs live for a long time," Harris said. "We knew them inside out. And we

wanted to capture in the studio what we did live. I think most first albums are like that. Any band that's been around a few years, the first album is like a best of those years."

The difficulty was in finding the right producer. One who had worked with the band in late '79 was Andy Scott, guitarist with glam rockers Sweet, who was relieved of his duties after suggesting that Harris play with a pick instead of his fingers. "I told him what he could do with that," Harris said.

His preferred option was Martin Birch, producer for Deep Purple – a major influence on Harris – and other rock giants including Rainbow and Whitesnake. But with Birch busy on Black Sabbath's *Heaven And Hell*, their first album with singer Ronnie James Dio, the Maiden job went to Wil Malone, who had also worked with Sabbath as conductor and arranger on the albums *Sabbath Bloody Sabbath*, *Sabotage* and *Never Say Die!*

To the band's irritation, Malone had a laidback approach

that bordered on disinterest. "We had problems with the producer," Harris said. "We used to laugh about him sitting there with his feet up on the desk, smoking a big cigar and reading *Country Life* – because he didn't do fuck all else. We'd try to get some feedback off this guy, and he'd just go, 'Oh, I think you could do better.' So in the end we would just ignore him. We ended up bypassing him and worked directly with the engineer, Martin Levan. We were still learning then, so thank fuck we had a good engineer who was into it."

There was also a moment, during the recording of the album's epic piece *Phantom Of The Opera*,

**"The first album didn't sound as ferocious as when we played live. It didn't have the anger."**

**Steve Harris**



**Iron Maiden in 1980: (l-r) Dave Murray, Clive Burr, Paul Di'Anno, Dennis Stratton, Steve Harris.**

when Harris sensed that Dennis Stratton, new to the band, might not be the right fit. On a day when the other members were absent from the studio, Stratton took it upon himself to add extra guitar harmonies and backing vocals to the track. Harris was horrified when he heard it. As he recalled: "They played it to me and I went, 'What the fuck's that?' It was like *Bohemian Rhapsody* gone wrong." Stratton later conceded: "It sounded too much like Queen. But that's me – I get carried away."

He was, he says, "a little upset" when his embellishments were wiped off the track. But he knew the score. This was Steve Harris's band, and





that message was clear to all concerned, their label EMI included. Maiden's manager Rod Smallwood was a bullish operator who had secured a long-term deal with EMI as the first step towards world domination, but as he said, "The record company never had anything whatsoever to do with the creative vision of Iron Maiden. No one went into the studio, ever. They even kept me out!"

As principal songwriter, Harris was sole author of five of the tracks featured on the album. *Prowler* was a politically incorrect stalker song full of menace; *Transylvania* a head-banging instrumental with sizzling interplay from Murray

and Stratton; *Strange World* a subtle, emotive number with sci-fi imagery; *Phantom Of The Opera* a seven-minute blitzkrieg and an air-guitarist's dream; *Iron Maiden*, the tumultuous signature song in which singer Paul Di'Anno delivered the self-fulfilling prophecy: 'Iron Maiden's gonna get you, no matter how far'.

Two tracks were co-written by Harris and Di'Anno: *Running Free*, the album's anthem, inspired by the singer's juvenile delinquency as an East End skinhead; and *Remember Tomorrow*, a deep heavy metal ballad which had for Di'Anno "a special meaning", its title derived from







Park life: Maiden off duty in East London.

## “I was always worried in the back of my mind that it could all come tumbling down rather quickly.”

Steve Harris

a favourite phrase of his grandfather's. And there was one song written by Dave Murray, a sleazy tribute to a Cockney hooker, named *Charlotte The Harlot*. “A great song!” Murray said. “Great title too.” Although he added, somewhat unconvincingly, “I can't remember where the lyrics came from.”

As Harris later said, “We did hold some songs back, I must admit.” Among them were two staples of the band's live set, *Sanctuary* and *Wrathchild*, both of which had been selected for a New Wave Of British Heavy Metal compilation album that EMI would release in February 1980, titled *Metal For Muthas*. There was also a feeling within the group that their album, despite Martin Levan's best efforts, sounded a little undercooked. “None of us were happy with the production,” Harris said. “It just didn't sound as ferocious as we did when we played live. It didn't have enough of the fire and the bite and the anger that we had in our playing.” But as he also recalled, “We knew we'd made a strong album. It had really good songs and loads of attitude. And as a singer, Paul had real charisma.

It was still a good album. Really good.”

It was more than that. Recorded for the meagre sum £12,000, Iron Maiden's debut turned out to be one of the greatest and most influential heavy metal albums of all time, a touchstone for Metallica and so many others that followed.

**I**ron Maiden were in Bristol, to play at a grubby little joint, fancifully named Romeo & Juliet's, on February 6, 1980 – the day when a damning review of the *Metal For Muthas* album appeared in a new issue of *Sounds*. It was just a few days after they finished recording at Kingsway that Maiden had begun the *Metal For Muthas* tour, headlining, with support from another young London-based band, Praying Mantis. *Sounds* writer Geoff Barton, who had done so much to promote the NWOBHM, pulled no punches in his assessment of the *Muthas* album, dismissing it as “a joke” and “a low-budget cash-in on the UK's much-vaunted metallic revival”.

His complaints centred on weak recordings of tracks by promising bands such as Praying Mantis

and Sledgehammer, and the inclusion of some lame acts, including the daftly named Toad The Wet Sprocket. But he praised the two Iron Maiden songs, *Wrathchild* and *Sanctuary*, as “raucous HM/punk crossovers and tantalizing tasters for their own forthcoming LP.” And his conclusion – hailing Maiden as the NWOBHM's leading power – was on the money. “The more I think about it, the more I reckon that the ‘guv'nors’ crown now rests on their collective Cockney heads.”

For Maiden, the timing of the NWOBHM had been fortuitous. As Harris said: “It was obvious that something big was happening, and that was great for us, being right in the thick of it.” But he added, in typically straight-talking fashion: “I never really paid much attention to whatever else was going on. It's not that we didn't care about other bands or anything like that. Some bands we knew as friends and we hoped they all did well. But we never thought about what everyone was doing. We just got on with our own thing.”

In the last week of February, *Running Free* was released as Iron Maiden's debut single. The cover art portrayed a sinister figure, lurking in a dark alley and brandishing a broken bottle as a longhaired rock fan ran for his life. The big reveal would come with the album cover. Ahead of that, *Running Free* blasted into the UK chart at No. 34 on the UK chart, leading to an appearance on *Top Of The Pops*. The band made a statement by refusing to mime to the track, as was standard for the show. Instead they performed live, the first group to do so on TOTP since The Who in 1972. “Everybody used to slag off *Top Of The Pops*,” Harris said, “but for a metal band to get on there was a big thing at the time. It was fantastic that we were on there mixed in with all this pop stuff. And of course my mum hated it, which was great.”

**I**t was followed by a major UK tour, opening for Judas Priest in 3000-capacity theatres. In many respects it was a perfect match – Priest the established masters of British metal, Maiden the young pretenders with a similar style and twin-guitar attack. But in the build-up to the tour, Di'Anno had cockily proclaimed to *Sounds*' Garry Bushell that Maiden would “blow the bollocks off Priest”. As a result, the tour played out in an atmosphere of simmering tension, with allegations of Priest's road crew sabotaging Maiden's sound. Di'Anno's boasting alienated some Priest fans. Many others were won over by Maiden's live prowess. And in a strange coincidence, a week after the tour ended, the Iron Maiden album, self-titled, and Priest's *British Steel*, were released on the same day, April 14.

In the two, there was much common ground: classically styled heavy metal power, dueling

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**Priest** frontman's studded-leather aesthetic is blatantly co-opted from gay bar culture, but comes to be visual shorthand for the metal scene. “Whatever floats your boat,” he will reflect of the S&M connotations, “but I'm what you'd call a very vanilla kind of gay guy.”

### MARCH 1979

**Ronnie James Dio** joins Black Sabbath. The singer's arrival not only reinvigorates the ailing Sabs on 1980's

*Heaven And Hell*, but also popularises the ‘devil horns’ that will become metal's universal hand gesture. “Invented, no,” Dio admits, saying that his Italian grandma first threw the horns to repel evil spirits, “but perfecting and making it important, yes. Although Gene Simmons will tell you that he invented it. But then again Gene invented breathing and shoes and everything else.”

### OCTOBER 1979

Ozzy Osbourne recruits **Randy Rhoads**.

The Californian guitarist's neo-classical flash proves to be the nucleus of the classic *Blizzard Of Ozz* and *Diary Of A Madman* albums – and Osbourne arguably never quite fills his shoes after the maddening plane wreck of 1982. “Of course I still think about Randy,” the singer reflects.



“What would he be doing now? It's an impossible fucking question for me to answer.”

**‘America falls for the NWOBHM. Judas Priest's *British Steel* is the first to plant the flag across the water.’**

### JULY 1980

America falls for the New Wave Of British Heavy Metal. Rammed with anarchic radio hits like *Living After Midnight*, Judas Priest's *British Steel* is the first NWOBHM album to plant the flag across the water. Within the next three years, a Union Jack-draped cavalry will pile through the open door, with Iron Maiden riling the Bible Belt with 1982's *The Number Of The Beast* and Def Leppard gobbling MTV with 1983's *Photograph*.





Onstage with Paul Di'Anno: "A larger than life character."

guitars, and bare-bones production. Di'Anno's singing was at times reminiscent of Priest's Rob Halford, and in *Remember Tomorrow* there were echoes of the Priest classic *Beyond The Realms Of Death*. And just as the cover of *British Steel* would become iconic – a razor blade stamped with the band's logo – so the artwork for *Iron Maiden* would burn an image into the consciousness of metal fans all over the world.

Illustrator Derek Riggs knew nothing of Iron Maiden when he painted a skeletal, wild-haired bogeyman on a lamp-lit city street. Riggs had thought the image might work for a punk band. But when Rod Smallwood came across this illustration, purely by chance, he immediately realized that it was a perfect embodiment of Maiden's trusty horror-mask stage prop.

"There was Eddie," Smallwood recalled. "It was like he'd been done just for the band." Only one small alteration was required – the lengthening of the figure's hair to align it with heavy metal, not punk. This vision of Eddie was so powerful that one young metal fan from Brazil, Max Cavalera, later the frontman for Sepultura, bought the album on the strength of the cover alone, having never heard a note of Maiden's music. "And when I played it," Cavalera said, "it fucking killed me."

The album received a rave review in *Sounds* from Geoff Barton. "Heavy metal for the 80s," he wrote,

"its blinding speed and rampant ferocity making most plastic heavy rock tracks from the 60s and 70s sound sloth-like and funeral-dirgey by comparison." Steve Harris might have balked at Barton's continued references to a punk sensibility in Maiden: "A safety-pin/loon-pant hybrid? In many ways, yes!" But that review played its part in what happened next – when this album, exceeding all expectations, entered the UK chart at No.4. For the levelheaded Harris, it was a shock. "I really couldn't believe it," he said. "It was like we'd fulfilled our dreams right away."

In the wake of this triumph, Maiden hit the road again, headlining in many of the same theatres in which they had opened for Priest. It was a marathon 45-date tour with Praying Mantis again as support, and in the midst of it came another single – a new version of *Sanctuary*, different to that on the *Metal For Muthas* album, with a cover by Derek Riggs picturing Eddie caught in the act of killing British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher: in her dead hand, an Iron Maiden poster torn from a wall, in his, a long knife dripping with her blood. The

resulting controversy led to a story in *The Daily Mirror* with the headline: IT'S MURDER! MAGGIE GETS ROCK MUGGING! The *Sanctuary* single did even better than *Running Free*, peaking at No.29.

The band's heavy touring schedule was "testing", as Murray put it. "You're in confined spaces," he said. "The tour bus, the dressing room. You live and breathe with each other, day in, day out, and that can be tough." But as Smallwood said of Maiden's global strategy: "We wanted to do big things in Europe and America. Some bands were huge in Britain but meant nothing elsewhere. We were looking at the whole world." And at the end of August – following an appearance at the Reading Festival as guests to a band that

## "Eddie struck me as an iconic visual that would buy everybody big houses."

Kiss bassist Gene Simmons

Harris much admired, UFO – Maiden embarked on their first European tour, opening for Kiss.

It was Kiss bassist Gene Simmons who picked Maiden for this tour. He told Smallwood: "Iron Maiden is going to take over from Kiss as the biggest merchandising band in America." And as he later elaborated: "Maiden immediately struck me as a band with huge potential. The band was both musical and powerful, and being the



continued next page

### AUGUST 16, 1980

The inaugural **Monsters Of Rock** festival. Promoters Paul Loasby and Maurice Jones settle on motorsport Mecca Donington Park as the site for the anti-Glastonbury, with the first bill boasting Rainbow, Judas Priest, Scorpions and Saxon. It will not always be plain sailing: in 1988 two fans are trampled during Guns N' Roses' set, and metal's dwindling fortunes see the festival shelved in 1997.

'The inaugural Monsters Of Rock festival takes place at motorsport Mecca Donington Park.'

### AUGUST 1, 1981

**Heavy Metal Holocaust.** In the incongruous setting of Port Vale FC's stadium, the newly formed Ozzy Osbourne solo band and a Motörhead riding high on that year's chart-topping *No Sleep 'Til Hammersmith* album wreak havoc with a PA supposedly rated at over 100,000 watts. In a quaint aside, local residents seeking a court injunction are placated with a free



day trip to Blackpool on the day of the show.

### JANUARY 20, 1982

The Prince Of Darkness dines on bat. **Ozzy Osbourne** already has form at the RSPCA, having decapitated a live dove at a 1981 label meeting in Los Angeles. Now, he ensures metal's notoriety when he bites on what he assumes to be a rubber bat on stage in Des

Moines, Iowa. "Immediately, though, something felt wrong. Very wrong," he says in his memoirs. "For a start, my mouth was instantly full of this warm, gloopy liquid, with the worst aftertaste you could ever imagine. I could feel it staining my teeth and running down my chin. Then the head in my mouth twitched."

### JUNE 14, 1982

US label **Metal Blade** puts 'Mettallica' on the radar. The







Reading Festival, 1980: Eddie and Paul Di'Anno backstage and (inset) Dave Murray, Di'Anno, Steve Harris on stage.

## “Paul Di'Anno was read the riot act and given chances to put things right. But he didn't put things right.” Steve Harris

capitalist pig that I am, Eddie struck me as an iconic visual that would buy everybody in the band big houses.”

Over 24 dates, Maiden played to more than 350,000 people, and it was during this tour that Paul Di'Anno had a moment he would remember for the rest of his life. “I saw Gene Simmons – one of the richest and most famous rock stars in the Western world – wearing a fucking Iron Maiden t-shirt,” he said. “That was when I realized the

world had finally gone mad.” But for Dennis Stratton, the end of the road was near.

As Smallwood saw it, Stratton was always a square peg in a round hole. “Dennis liked the Eagles,” he said, “and wore red strides and a floppy white top. Sadly, he just wasn't very metal.” Stratton's last act with Maiden was the recording of a one-off single, *Women In Uniform*, a cover of a corny number by Australian band Skyhooks. When the single was released in November, to

coincide with the final UK leg of the tour, Stratton had been fired. His replacement was Adrian Smith, an old friend of Dave Murray's. “Adrian and I were in a band together, way back,” Murray said. “Before I joined Maiden in '75.” With Smith broken in on that tour, the band promptly set to work on their second album. And this time, they had the producer that Steve Harris had wanted all along.

According to Dave Murray, the second album, *Killers*, was “the real turning point” for Iron Maiden. “I think the band really kicked on from the first album,” he said, “and a big part of that was having Martin Birch as our producer. We were all big fans of Martin's work with Deep Purple. We also loved what he did with Black Sabbath on *Heaven And Hell*, so for Martin to come on board for *Killers* was fantastic. He brought something new to our sound. On the first album we were playing fast, almost like punk rock, but with more melody. Martin's production on *Killers* gave us a little more polish, without losing our edge. The whole album was really powerful and atmospheric, and it was Martin Birch who brought that out of us.”

*Killers* was recorded in December 1980 at London's Battery Studios. Harris said: “Just like the first album, we had a lot of songs that we'd been playing live. I only had to write three new ones.”

The album featured ten songs: nine written by Harris alone, the title track by Harris and Di'Anno. The latter was a heavy drama with grisly lyrics and a dominant performance from the singer. As Murray said: “Paul sounded great on *Killers*, and that song had such a pure and raw energy.”

*Wrathchild* had a dark intensity and an irresistible force, this new version, sharply focused by Birch, so much heavier than the *Metal For Muthas* cut. There was blazing energy in *Another Life*, *Innocent Exile*, *Purgatory* and *Drifter*, and an epic feel to the instrumental *Genghis Khan*. And in the three newly written tracks, there was a second instrumental piece, *The Ides Of March*, to serve as the album's grandiose intro; a semi-acoustic number, *Prodigal Son*, to add a different texture; and

MAIN + INSET: GEORGE BODNAR ARCHIVE/ICONICPIX

from previous page

first rumbles of the thrash-metal scene are felt as Metal Blade Records founder Brian Slagel lets Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield, and early guitarist Lloyd Grant contribute *Hit The Lights* to his *Metal Massacre* compilation (also featuring Ratt and Steeler). Even an unfortunate typo – the song is credited to ‘Mettallica’ – can't stop the band's ascent.

**MAY 4, 1984**

*This Is Spinal Tap* skewers the metal scene. Even metal's most ardent

admirer would admit the scene was ripe for mockery, and Rob Reiner's faux-documentary squeezes out every last drop. Even at its most ridiculous, *Tap* is rooted in reality: the pint-sized Stonehenge smirked at Sabbath's *Born Again* tour set, while Nigel Tufnel's violin solo is a wink at Jimmy Page's bowmanship on *Dazed And Confused*.

**AUGUST 1985**

The PMRC protect America's

youth. Founded by the so-called ‘Washington Wives’ – spouses of high-ranking US politicians led by Tipper Gore – the Parents Music Resource Center negotiates the addition of ‘Parental Advisory:

Explicit Lyrics’ labels to offending metal albums. The collective's notorious ‘Filthy Fifteen’ hit-list includes Judas Priest, Mötley Crüe, AC/DC, Twisted Sister and



**‘The first rumbles of thrash metal are felt as ‘Mettallica’ debut on the Metal Massacre compilation.’**

W.A.S.P, but also... wait for it... Madonna and Cyndi Lauper.

**APRIL 1987**

*Headbanger's Ball* debuts on MTV. Unloved by the mass media, metal gets a shop window as host Riki Rachtman fronts a three-hour show, helping break behemoths like Guns N' Roses and showcasing more esoteric acts including *Helloween* and *Grim Reaper*. All is well until alt.rock's mid-90s takeover, when the show is axed without warning.



a spiritual heir to *Phantom Of The Opera* in the blood and thunder of the Edgar Allen Poe-inspired *Murders In The Rue Morgue*.

What Derek Riggs created for the cover of *Killers* was fittingly gruesome, with Eddie as an axe-wielding maniac grinning with pleasure as his victim falls. In the background, an East End street scene, featuring a sex shop, the figure of Charlotte The Harlot lit in red in a window above, and the Ruskin Arms, the pub where many early Maiden gigs were staged.

Ironically, given its cover, *Killers* was the subject of a hatchet job by *Sounds* critic Robbi Millar, who slammed the album as “a failure” and described much of its contents as “well dodgy”. The only positive review came from Malcolm Dome in *Record Mirror*. But as Harris said: “We knew it was a bloody good album.”

When *Killers* was released on February 29, 1981, the band had already begun a UK tour, the first phase of a worldwide campaign that would stretch to 113 dates. *Killers* reached No. 12 in the UK, eight places lower than the first album’s peak position. But as the tour progressed, sales of *Killers* eventually passed 750,000, more than double that of the debut, with 150,000 units shifted in America. “It was all about touring,” Adrian Smith said. “Honest hard work. It wasn’t about going for the big commercial album. We did what we did. And a lot of that was down to Steve leading the band. He’s very straight ahead.”

On the UK tour, Maiden’s support act was Trust, the French punk-metal band that had been championed by AC/DC singer Bon Scott, and featured a young, flat-nosed British drummer by the name of Nicko McBrain. It was when Maiden ventured into Europe in May that the first signs of trouble came. Paul Di’Anno had always had a taste for the rock’n’roll lifestyle, and after he blew out his voice due to excessive partying, several gigs in Germany were cancelled.

“Paul was a larger than life character,” Harris said. “He was an important part of the band, and on the surface of it, what people could see, it was working well with Paul. But we had this rule: people have to remember what they’re there for. We never cared what they did anywhere else, as long as they did their gig. And Paul was getting totally fucked up.” Di’Anno admitted as much: “It wasn’t just that I was snorting a bit of coke,” he said. “I was going for it non-stop, 24 hours a day.”

The simple fact was that Iron Maiden could not carry passengers. Touring was key to the band’s development. And while Di’Anno managed to keep it together for another three months – through dates in the Far East, where the live EP *Maiden Japan* was recorded, and in North America, where the band opened again for Judas Priest – it was clear to



Harris that a tough decision had to be made.

“Paul was given chances,” he said. “He was read the riot act, and given the chance to put things right. But he didn’t put things right. And we knew that if we didn’t do something we’d go down hill pretty sharply and that would be the end of it.”

When the band returned to Europe in August, Harris and Smallwood attended the Reading Festival to watch NWOBHM group Samson and meet with their singer. Bruce Dickinson had first seen Iron Maiden play live in May 1979 when they supported Samson at the Music Machine club in London. “It was blindingly obvious,” he said, “that Maiden were going to be massive. This hyper-kinetic band, it was really a force of nature. And Paul Di’Anno, he was okay, but I thought, ‘I could really do something with that band!’” A few days after his meeting with Harris and Smallwood at Reading, Dickinson auditioned in secret for Maiden, before the band set out with Di’Anno for the last run of European shows.

According to Di’Anno, the catalyst for his exit from the band was the death in 1981 of his grandfather, the man who had inspired *Remember Tomorrow*. “After losing my grandad,” he said, “being in a rock band just didn’t seem so important anymore.” Di’Anno’s final show as the singer for Iron Maiden was in Copenhagen on September 10,

1981. The matter was resolved in a meeting with the band and Rod Smallwood. “It was a civilized discussion,” Di’Anno recalled. “It was literally a case of Rod saying, ‘Paul, we think it’s best if you leave Maiden,’ and me saying, ‘That’s alright, I was going to resign anyway.’”

Harris was sad that it had come to this. “I didn’t like doing what I had to do,” he said. “We were all gutted to lose Paul, and we tried hard to keep him in the band, but he didn’t try hard enough himself.”

He also understood what a gamble this was. “Changing a singer is a massive thing for any band. And we’d done well with the first two albums. We knew we didn’t have any choice but to make the change, but you don’t know what’s going to happen next.”

Iron Maiden had come so far in such a short space of time, and yet, in September

1981, as they waited to announce Bruce Dickinson as the band’s new singer, Steve Harris was in one sense back where he was in January 1980 – a worried man. “No matter how good Bruce was, there was no guarantee that Maiden fans were going to take to him,” he said. “It was a very, very worrying time. We knew Bruce was good, but he was very different to Paul. So you’re thinking, are people going to accept this?” As it turned out, Harris had the answer to that question, and it was quite simple. “I just thought, well, they’ll have to!”

**“We knew Bruce was good, but he was very different to Paul. It was a very worrying time.”**

**Steve Harris**

continued on page 40

**JULY 1, 1987**

**Napalm Death** redefine the limits of ‘heavy’. They dub themselves “Motörhead times 10”, and any listener who makes it through the Brummies’ debut album *Scum* – a half-hour, 28-song onslaught whose guttural fury has arguably never been topped – goes straight out and forms a grindcore band.

**JULY 1987**

**Guns N’ Roses** eat the planet. The



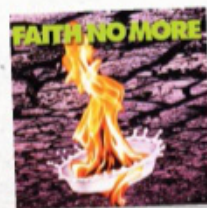
ultimate slow-burner, the Gunners’ debut album *Appetite For Destruction* loiters on the chart’s foothills until a late-night MTV screening of *Welcome To The Jungle* gives the band their flashpoint. Within a year, GN’R have topped the *Billboard* chart, shuffled hard rock’s world order and eclipsed **Aerosmith** on a support tour (“I remember being a little jealous,” reflects Joe Perry, “because they were really hitting the nail on the head”).

**JUNE 17, 1988**

**The Decline Of Western Civilisation Part II: The Metal Years** arrives. Penelope Spheeris’s documentary on the LA metal scene catches the obnoxious excess that grunge will shortly sweep away. From Gene Simmons’s misadventures in a lingerie store to a babe-bedecked Paul Stanley and **W.A.S.P.’s** darkly inebriated Chris Holmes, the genre’s dinosaurs had never looked so ripe for culling.

**JUNE 20, 1989**

**Faith No More** tear up the heavy blueprint. The switch-up of early vocalist Chuck Mosley for hairdryer-soiling new boy Mike Patton announces fresh possibilities for metal on *The Real Thing*, an album whose standouts like *Epic* and *From Out Of Nowhere* take in funk, thrash, hip-hop and prog. Everyone approves – except the Red Hot Chili Peppers, who reckon *Epic* has stolen their formula.



**AUGUST 12 & 13, 1989**

Metal helps thaw the Cold War. Grandly trailed by über-manager Doc McGhee as Russia’s Woodstock, the **Moscow Music Peace Festival** hosts Ozzy Osbourne, Mötley Crüe and the Scorpions in the name of world peace. But the backstage is less harmonious, as the Crüe fume over their demotion beneath Bon Jovi (“I walked right up to Doc and pushed him in his fat little chest,” recalls Tommy





# THE FOURTH HORSEMAN

From his stubborn individuality to his taste in music, Metallica's **Cliff Burton** was a true one-off.

Words: **Mick Wall** with **Joel McIver**

**F**or Kirk Hammett it was late afternoon in the US. For me it was early morning in England. But for both of us time was moving backwards as we recalled the fallen soldier who put the metal into Metallica: their former bassist Cliff Burton.

"Cliff had a lot of integrity," Kirk said, quietly. "And his way of expressing that integrity was in one stock sentence which I still use to this day, and it was: 'I don't give a fuck.' He really just cared about the music and the integrity behind the music. He was just very, very real."

He certainly was. You only had to look at him to see that. The long, straight hair, parted down the middle; the moth-eaten cardigan and bell-bottom jeans; the weird little bum-fluff 'tache; the tee with some obscure band on it. At a time when poodle-hair, Spandex and make-up were the norm in rock, these were all signifiers of what made Cliff Burton different, signposts to a soul born old that didn't know how to compromise. That truly didn't give a fuck.

Kirk sighed. "I don't know if he knew somehow that his time was limited, but he really lived it like it was his last day, because he just wouldn't settle for anything other than what he believed in. And that taught me a lot. To this day there are situations that I'm going through, and I can just picture Cliff saying: 'What's real to you? What really matters?' And he would go through a bunch of points that didn't really matter. He would name them off, and at the end of each one he'd say: 'I don't give a fuck!' He was a very, very strong guy. Stubborn at times, and because of that he and I would clash sometimes. But we really were just bros, and he was a big influence on all of us."

He remains so to this day. The legend of Cliff Burton has been the biggest unifying influence on all subsequent generations of heavy metal bands, whatever their stripe. Being true to yourself may have been the founding tenet of the original rock and metal giants, but by the time Metallica came along to redraw the musical map in the 80s, metal had become codified. The rules had straight-jacketed the music's essential, freewheeling spirit. Cliff Burton made it his mission to break those

codes. Every musician since who has tried to do the same owes him big-time. Cliff was the fearless one, the guy who stood his ground, holding up his middle finger saying: "What's real to you? I don't give a fuck."

**C**lifford Lee Burton was born February 10, 1962. His father Ray, from Tennessee, worked in San Francisco's Bay Area as an Assistant Highway Engineer. Ray's wife Jan was a special needs teacher. Cliff was the youngest brother to Scott David and Connie. When Scott died of a brain aneurysm when Cliff was 13, it had a profound effect on him, reinforcing the idea that life was not to be squandered on trying too hard to make other people happy.

Cliff had played the piano since he was six. Now he told others: "I'm gonna be the best bassist for my brother." Jan was "totally amazed cos none of

It was either that or get his hair cut – and Cliff wasn't doing that.

**C**liff was 14 when he began playing in his first band, EZ Street, named after a strip joint in San Mateo. He later played down the experience, dismissing EZ Street's music as "pretty silly, actually... a lot of covers, just wimpy shit". EZ Street afforded him his first chance to play real gigs, performing regularly at the International Cafe in Berkeley. EZ Street also included guitarist Jim Martin, a likeminded soul who went on to join Faith No More. As Martin once observed: "Most of what you see on stage at a rock show, whether it's a thrash gig or some heavy hip-hop club, it's all about fantasy. The thing about Cliff was he was real. He wasn't acting out the part to be in a band, he really was that guy. He never saw himself as a star. He was just another one of the guys."

By the time Cliff graduated from high school in 1980, the Burton character was fully formed: an HP Lovecraft-reading, piano-playing homebody who loved beer, Mexican food, pot and acid. A free-thinker who drove a beat-up 1972 VW station wagon nicknamed The Grass-hopper, in which he mixed his Lynyrd Skynyrd tapes with Bach concertos. His favourite pastime

was hanging out with his friends Jim Martin and Dave DiDonato, going fishing and hunting, or just sitting around into the small hours playing Dungeons & Dragons.

Enrolling at Chabot College in nearby Hayward, Cliff studied classical music and theory. He hooked up again with Jim Martin, and formed an instrumental trio, Agents Of Misfortune, a short-lived outfit in which Cliff first tried incorporating harmonics into his bass playing and improvising with distortion, a trick learned from Lemmy.

**I**n 1982, Cliff joined Trauma, well-known to Bay Area scene-makers as a theatrical Iron Maiden-style band. He practised four to six hours a day, every day. There's a wonderful video clip of them on YouTube. Amid billowing dry ice can be seen the incongruous figure of 19-year-old Cliff Burton, unself-consciously ➤

## "The band was pretty good, but the bass player was phenomenal."

Metal Blade Records' Brian Slagel on seeing Cliff Burton with Trauma

the kids in our family had any musical talent." His early influence was a teacher named Steve Doherty. "He was the one who made Cliff take Beethoven and Bach, made him learn to read music etcetera."

Speaking in 1987 with Cliff's old friend Harald Oimeon, Jan described Cliff as "very quiet" and "normal", except for his insistence from a very early age on being "his own person". There was also a stubborn, Aquarian side to Cliff. Playing with kids outside was "boring". Cliff preferred his own company, reading books and playing music. "He was very bright. In the third grade they tested him and he got eleventh-grade comprehension."

Playing Little League baseball for the Castro Valley Auto House team, he was known as a big hitter. As a teenager, he took a Saturday job at an equipment rental yard called Castro Valley Rentals, where the older workers nicknamed him Cowboy, after the cheap straw hat he always wore to work.









**Masters, not puppets: (l-r) Cliff Burton, James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich, Kirk Hammett**

headbanging, his playing full of impressively odd jazz timings and psychedelic overtones.

When he decided to quit college to pursue music full-time, his parents were concerned. Jan: "We said: 'We'll give you four years. We'll pay for your rent and your food. But after that four years is over, if we don't see some slow progress or moderate progress, if you're just not going anyplace and it's obvious you're not going to make a living out of it, then you're going to have to get a job and do something else.' He said: 'Fine.'"

It was Brian Slagel who recommended Cliff Burton to Lars Ulrich. Slagel's label, Metal Blade, had issued the first ever Metallica recording, *Hit The Lights*, on the 1982 compilation *Metal Massacre*. Trauma was one of the bands he was considering including on *Metal Massacre II*.

"The band was pretty good," he recalls, "but the bass player was phenomenal." Knowing Metallica were looking for someone to replace bassist Ron McGovney, when Trauma played LA's Troubadour club a couple of weeks later Slagel took Lars and James Hetfield there. Afterwards, "Lars came up to me and said: 'That is going to be our bass player!'"

Nevertheless, it took months for Lars and James to persuade Cliff to even jam with them. Cliff lived

in San Francisco, a cultural quantum leap away from the neon ooze of LA where Metallica lived.

Cliff told them: "I like it up here. So they said: 'Yeah, well, we were thinking about [moving to San Francisco] anyway.' So they came up, and we got together in this room, set up the gear and blasted it out for a couple of days. It was obvious straight away that it was a good thing to do, so we did it."

What they hadn't realised was that in Cliff, Metallica hadn't just brought in a supremely gifted

Lars added: "Cliff was very, very different from James and [me]. He was an interesting mix of the kind of hippie, trippy, non-conformist vibe that was so well-known about San Francisco, kind of in his own head-space, and then also a whole side that was the redneck element – a beer-drinking, hell-raising, listening to ZZ Top and Lynyrd Skynyrd type of thing. So he was a very interesting mix of many different types of personalities. I was infatuated with his uniqueness. I was infatuated with his lack of conformity, and his insistence on doing his own thing, even to the point of ridicule."

Cliff Burton was simply "not your basic human being," as James, laughing, later put it. "He was really intellectual but very to-the-point. He meant business, and you couldn't fuck around with him. I wanted to get that respect that he had. We gave him shit about his bell-bottoms every day. He didn't care. 'This is what I wear. Fuck you.'"

While Lars and James were clearly besotted with Cliff from the word go, the member of Metallica who grew closest to him was the next to join: Kirk Hammett. In common with Cliff, Kirk had studied classical music. Like Cliff, he still practised every day, based

## "I was infatuated with Cliff's lack of conformity, and his insistence on doing his own thing."

Lars Ulrich

bass player, they had also acquired a teacher.

As James later told me, as well as turning him and Lars on to artists like ZZ Top and Yes, Kate Bush and Peter Gabriel, Cliff was also "the most schooled of any of us; he had gone to junior college to learn some things about music, and taught us quite a few things. He had such a character to himself, and it was a very strong personality, he did creep into all of us eventually."

continued from page 37

Lee, "knocking him over on to the ground like a broken Weeble").

### JULY 8, 1991

**Anthrax** and **Public Enemy** bring the noise. New York's goonish culture mulchers find unlikely solidarity with rap iconoclasts Chuck D and Flavor Flav, on a UK No.14 hit whose associated joint tour brings white and black fans into the same mosh-pit but bemuses the industry. "MTV don't know where to put *Bring The Noise*,"

sighs D. "They don't even know what to call it."

### SEPTEMBER 24, 1991

**Nirvana's** *Nevermind* changes everything. Like a rusty pin in bubblegum, the visceral slash of Kurt Cobain's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* riff renders the worst exponents of hair-metal obsolete and laughable. Even so, talk of a metal cull is overblown: alongside *Nevermind*, **Metallica** release their career-

best-selling Black Album and **Guns N' Roses** go multi-platinum with the twin *Use Your Illusion* albums.

### NOVEMBER 3, 1992

Tom Morello flips his switch. Perhaps the greatest sonic maverick since Hendrix, **Rage Against The Machine's** noisenik axeman lights up the band's debut album with his bag of tricks. The riffs are



**'Anthrax and Public Enemy find unlikely solidarity and bring black and white fans into the same mosh-pit.'**

savage and simplistic, but Morello's DigiTech Whammy pedal-assisted lead work is off the chart, evoking chewed-up tape, car alarms and anarchy.

### AUGUST 10, 1993

Black metal commits murder most foul. While the pseudo-satanic posturing of mainstream metal is picketed in the US Bible Belt, the Norwegian scene reveals itself as a far more dangerous beast. In 1991, black metallers **Mayhem** lost their singer Per Yngve Ohlin (otherwise



on lessons given to him by Joe Satriani. On tour in their earliest days, when they were stayed in a small motel, James and Lars would share one room, Cliff and Kirk the other.

"We were, in the first few years of the band, living in each other's back pockets," Kirk told me. "We were very close."

At night, after a show, Kirk and Cliff would get their acoustic guitars out. "He didn't play bass that much away from stage, so he was always playing guitar. And we would just jam. We had similar interests. He was into horror movies and HP Lovecraft, as I was. He enjoyed doing hallucinogenics, and so did I. He would tell me: 'Hey, man, I just took some acid. Whatever you do don't tell the other guys.' I would say: 'Sure, man.' I didn't take acid in any working environment, but it never bothered him."

LSD, magic mushrooms, weed and pot... in Cliff's hands these were creative tools, not just tickets to ride. Or as Cliff put it: "You don't burn out from going too fast. You burn out from going too slow and getting bored."

Kirk continues: "You also have to understand though, on an emotional level, we all tended to look up to him cos he was the guy with the most life experience. He was always the one who exuded the most confidence – the guy who had the best sense of ethics and morals. Whereas we were like slash and burn, seek and destroy, he would take a step back first and think about things and then slash and burn, seek and destroy. This was the guy who would sit around and listen to the Eagles and the Velvet Underground. He turned us on to R.E.M., he turned us on to Creedence [Clearwater Revival]. And he also loved Lynyrd Skynyrd too. Cliff was so far ahead of his time."

A born leader, when the band's first manager, Jonny Z, told them that distributors had demanded they change the proposed title of their debut album, *Metal Up Your Ass*, Cliff "got real mad" and yelled at Jonny: "Kill 'em all! Kill 'em all!" Jonny laughs as he recounts the incident. "The next thing you know, the album was called *Kill 'Em All*."

With Cliff in charge of the on-the-road music, the others got lessons in the history of rock. It was also Cliff who instigated the band's habit of always doing meet-and-greets after each show, no matter how small. According to their friend Bill Hale, "Cliff was the first one who went out and shook hands with the fans, cos Cliff was a fan."

He wasn't a goody two-shoes, though. Cliff knew how to party. "We would [all] drink day in and day out and hardly come up for air," Kirk recalled. Once Metallica began to achieve a level of fame, there were also groupies. "Lars would charm them, talk his way into their pants," James recalled. "Kirk had a baby face that was appealing to girls."



## "If there was something Cliff wasn't gonna like, it wasn't gonna happen. No one f\*\*ked with Cliff."

Tour manager Bobby Schneider

Cliff, he had a big dick. Word got around about that, I guess."

It wasn't until the band's second album, *Ride The Lightning*, in 1984 that Cliff's influence on Metallica really began to assert itself on record. According to producer Flemming Rasmussen, while it was "Lars and James that were more or less in charge" in terms of pure musical vision, "from an artistic point of view it'd probably be Cliff". This showed not just in the shape of the HP Lovecraft-inspired monster album closer, *The Call Of Ktulu*, but also in the encouragement they needed to try the acoustic ballad *Fade To Black*. Cliff, saw it as a step forward.

Even the bands who opened for Metallica on tour took notice of their bassist. Joey Vera, bassist with Armored Saint, was especially drawn to Cliff. "We had a kinship, Cliff and I, because we also listened to some jazz fusion. He also had this really strong punk aesthetic... I always perceived Cliff as someone who was very strongly opinionated and

very much not willing to do anything which would go against what he believed in. It was pretty evident back then that it mattered to the rest of the guys too."

When Metallica made their first Castle Donington festival appearance, in 1985, just like every band low on the bill they were greeted by a hail of beer cans and plastic bottles of piss. Cliff, though, was unfazed. "Donington was a day of targets and projectiles," he told Harald. "I think they liked us, though."

At the Day On The Green festival in San Francisco two weeks later, James ran amok in a Jägermeister fit and trashed the dressing room. Cliff cooled him out with one look. "Cliff was the most mature out of all of us," said Kirk. "When I'd do something stupid, or Lars or James would do something stupid, he was the guy who would say: 'What the hell were you thinking?' He was always the guy to reprimand us."

When Bobby Schneider became their tour manager in 1985, he says it was clear that "Cliff ➤

known as 'Dead') to a self-inflicted shotgun wound. Now, guitarist Øystein Aarseth – known as Euronymous – is stabbed 23 times in a confrontation with Burzum's Varg Vikernes.

### MARCH 22, 1994

Pantera keep the guitar solo alive. In an era when traditional metal solos are practically embargoed, the Texans burn the memo, taking seventh album *Far Beyond Driven* to No.1 on the *Billboard* chart. "Where I came from, if you

**'Pantera keep the guitar solo alive in an era when traditional metal solos are practically embargoed.'**

couldn't play all six strings you weren't jack-shit," notes guitarist Dimebag Darrell. "I came from the old-school; if you really wanna express yourself, then you gotta get up on them little strings and bend those motherfuckers all over the place."

### OCTOBER 25 & 26, 1996

Ozzfest takes on alt.rock. Having been



Fafara of Coal Chamber. "It was the first time the United States had ever seen anything like it. Those kids that are heavily into music, who go to school dressed

told to "basically fuck off" when pitching her husband to the Lollapalooza festival, Sharon Osbourne conceives a heavier, hairier all-dayer. "Ozzfest was incredible," reflects Dez

like the bands they were into and probably got shit for it, they were the ones coming to see us."

### MAY 5, 1998

Rob Halford comes out. While the Priest frontman's admission on MTV is a commercial gamble in a metal scene sometimes accused of homophobia, the public response is heartening. "I'd never seen such an outpouring of love from







was the backbone. Cliff was the guy who everybody looked to. If there was something Cliff wasn't gonna like, it wasn't gonna happen. No one fucked with Cliff."

But no one, not even Cliff Burton, can cheat death. Cliff knew that. What he couldn't have known was how cruelly death would play the game, snatching him away just as it seemed things were reaching their zenith in his life, both musically and personally.

**T**he third Metallica album, *Master Of Puppets*, released in March 1986 just six months before Cliff died, wasn't just a new peak for the band, it was a game changer in the history of rock and metal. It was the springboard for the astonishing success Metallica would later enjoy, and it seemed like it would be the start of the most remarkable lineage of albums since Led Zeppelin in their

**"Cliff loved to jam and just go crazy with sounds. He loved soundscapes, but in a heavy way."**

**James Hetfield**

heyday. Instead it became the full stop that nearly finished off the band – the beginning and end of an era all in one.

Although Cliff received co-writing credits on only three of its eight tracks, Kirk feels that "people don't talk enough about Cliff's contribution to that album. I remember him playing the intro to *Damage, Inc* on the *Ride The Lightning* tour. It has all those bass swells and harmonies on it. I remember him saying, 'Yeah, it's based on a Bach piece.' I asked him which one and I'm pretty sure he said it was *Come Sweetly Death* or something like that."

The piece Kirk's referring to is *Come, Sweet Death*, from the 69 Sacred Songs And Arias that Johann Sebastian Bach contributed to Georg Christian Schemelli's *Musical Songbook*, nearly a thousand song-texts written as musical notation indicating

intervals, chords and non-chord tones in relation to a bass note, providing harmonic structure. A very Cliff-like musical preoccupation.

Outside the studio, when Cliff and Kirk weren't getting wasted in their hotel room, "we'd go out and play poker for eight hours straight after being up for twenty-four hours. We'd find a seafood restaurant that was open, eat raw oysters and drink beer, scream at the natives while we were drunk." They were, he said, "some of my best memories" from that time.

It seemed nothing could stop Metallica. By summer 1986, *Master Of Puppets* had sold more than 500,000 copies, giving the band their first gold record and taking them into the US Top 30 for the first time. Over three decades later, it has now sold almost seven million copies in America alone, and almost as many more around the world.

Kirk recalled a meeting on the back of the tour bus when they were told they now had enough money to put down payments on their own houses: "The first thing that Cliff said was, 'I wanna house where I can shoot my gun that shoots knives!' That was like a typical Cliff Burton thing to say."

For Cliff, success was not an end in itself. This was just the beginning. Backstage at Birmingham Odeon, a young music journalist named Garry Sharpe-Young asked Cliff

what the band would do if one of them died.

"What we were actually discussing was the hypothesis of Lars meeting his maker," Sharpe-Young recalled. "Cliff said they would have a big drunken party in his honour, and then get in a new drummer – fast."

After a final climactic show in London, the band set off for dates in Europe. At the third show, at the Solnahallen in Stockholm, James – who until then had been unable to play guitar since a skateboarding accident three months before (roadie John Marshall had played guitar during James's convalescence) – played superbly, the band back to their classic four-man shape.

Flying high again, Metallica outdid themselves, Cliff hitting new heights as he added a bizarre yet affecting version of *The Star Spangled Banner* to his usual bass solo, headbanging around the stage, his right arm windmilling. Lately he'd complained again of back pain. Not that night, though.

Afterwards, they climbed aboard the tour bus







Riding the lightning: on stage as well as in the studio, Cliff was an uncompromising and gifted musician.

## “He turned us on to R.E.M., Creedence [Clearwater Revival]. And he also loved Lynyrd Skynyrd too. Cliff was so far ahead of his time.” Kirk Hammett

for the drive to the next day’s show in Copenhagen. It would be a long journey and the bus was cramped. Kirk and Cliff cut cards to see who got a more comfortable window-side bunk, Cliff winning when he drew the ace of spades. He and James stayed awake a little longer, James drinking vodka, Cliff smoking a spliff. Their bunks were at the back, next to each other. They both nodded off. The whole bus was silent when it began to leave the road...

As we now know, Cliff died in the crash, his body thrown through the bunk-side window and crushed by the weight of the bus falling on him.

Back at the hotel that first night without Cliff, they got drunk. No matter how much they drank, none could find sleep. James fell to pieces, grief-stricken one moment, full of rage the next. At four in the morning, the others could hear James drunk in the street outside, screaming: “Cliff! Where are you?!” Kirk couldn’t bear it and burst into tears.

The news travelled fast. Gary Holt of Exodus was “moving a twenty-five-gallon fish tank” out of his parents’ house when he heard. “Usually when you hear about a musician dying, it’s at his own hand – you know, drug overdose, chokes on his vomit, shit that would have been old hat. But dying in a bus crash? That was the first I’d heard of that.”

Jim Martin heard from Cliff’s mother, Jan. “My heart sank.” Cliff, he said, “was part of the think-tank.” Jim was due back on the road the next day, and travelled home in between tour dates to attend his funeral.

Dave Mustaine turned to drugs: “I went straight to the dope, man, got some shit and started singing and crying and writing this song...” The song was *In My Darkest Hour*, the centrepiece of the next Megadeth album, *So Far, So Good... So What!*.

There was a memorial service back in San Francisco during the first week of October. Cliff’s funeral was held on Tuesday, October 7, at Chapel Of The Valley in Castro Valley, where he had lived with his folks most of his life. As well as Cliff’s immediate family, his girlfriend Corinne and best pals Jim Martin and David DiDonato were there,

along with the rest of Metallica, plus Bobby Schneider and their co-manager Peter Mensch. Other mourners included all of Exodus, Trauma, and Faith No More drummer Mike Bordin.

Cliff’s ashes were taken and spread at the Maxwell Ranch. As DiDonato later recalled: “We stood in a large circle, with Cliff’s ashes in the centre. Each of us walked into the centre and took a handful of him and said what we had to say... Then he was cast on to the earth, in a place he loved very much.” Gary Holt recalls: “It was a sombre affair, to say the least. But then you gather up at someone’s house after and you get drunk and share a laugh, you know?”

A commemorative headstone was laid, engraved: IN LOVING MEMORY OF and below that a picture of Cliff taken not long before he died. Underneath: CLIFFORD LEE BURTON CANNOT THE KINGDOM OF SALVATION TAKE ME HOME, then finally: FEBRUARY 10 1962 SEPTEMBER 27 1986.

The aftershocks of Cliff Burton’s death would continue to reverberate around Lars Ulrich, James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett for the rest of their lives. Kirk: “When I first joined the band there was a huge infusion of new energy, and up until Cliff died we were just so psyched about everything and life in general. But that kind of ended when Cliff left.” He paused then added: “I still think about him every day... Something he said, something he did, just... something.”

A few months before he died, Cliff was asked what advice he had for aspiring young musicians. He replied: “When I first started, I decided that I would devote my life to it.” Devotion, he said, was the key. “To absolutely devote yourself to that, to virtually marry yourself to

what you’re going to do and not get sidetracked by all the other bullshit that life has to offer.”

Metallica’s search for a new bassist began almost immediately – Jason Newsted was appointed within weeks of Cliff’s funeral. No real replacement for Cliff Burton has ever been found, though. Instead his spirit lives on in Metallica. Speaking now, James Hetfield says that whenever Metallica are involved in new, exciting projects, “there’s always thoughts, when we’re doing things, in the back of our minds: ‘Wow! Cliff would just love this’, you know?”

Certainly there’s little doubt that Cliff – the guy who turned the others on to Lou Reed’s 60s band the Velvet Underground – would have been stoked by the *Lulu* album, released in 2011.

“I’m still close with Jim Martin, who was an extremely great friend of Cliff’s,” James said at the time of that record, “and he is unbelievably excited about this Lou Reed/Metallica collaboration. We talked a bit about Cliff, and about him being alive in our spirit around the whole thing, in the studio when we were doing it. It’s raw, it’s loose, and there’s a lot of floor takes.

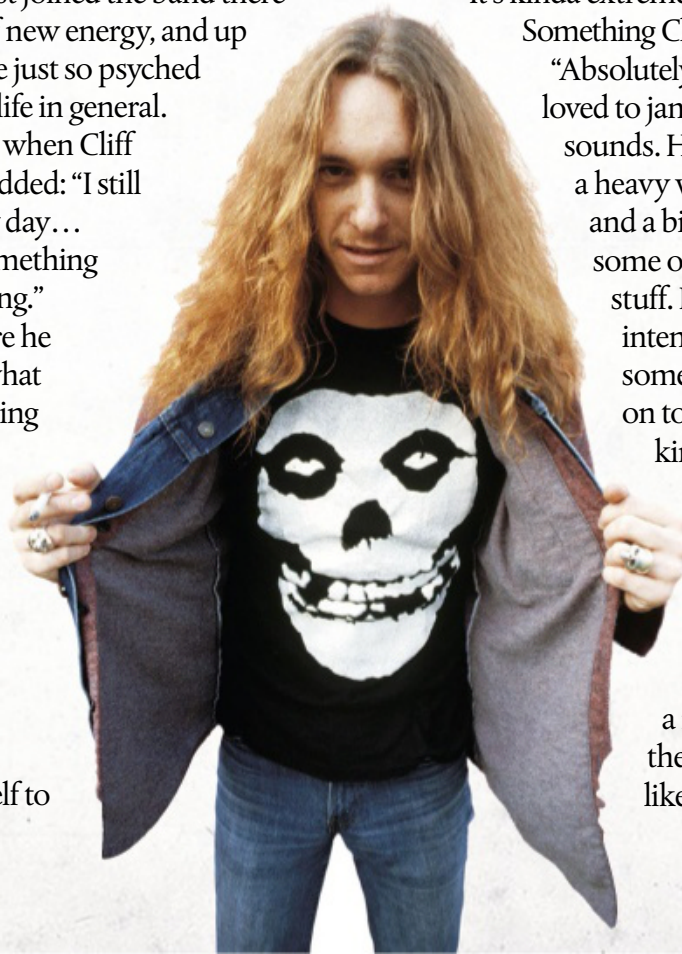
It’s kinda extreme jamming.”

Something Cliff always encouraged.

“Absolutely,” agrees James. “Oh, he loved to jam and just go crazy with sounds. He loved soundscapes, but in a heavy way. He was a big fan of that and a big fan of Pink Floyd and some of the really deep but heavy stuff. Lou’s lyrics were very intense and dark, and that was something that Cliff turned us on to as well. He was a unique kind of guy, and Lou is too.”

Cliff Burton – the uncompromising soul and conscience of Metallica, in life and, still, in death. We salute you.

There was never a metalhead like you before, there will never be a metalhead like you again. ❶







# BLOOD BROTHERS

They're one of thrash metal's Big Four, and, more than 30 years on, **Slayer's** iconic, monstrous *Reign In Blood* album stands as a benchmark for what heavy metal can and should be.

Words: **Dave Everley**

**T**he end of days is approaching; the precise point when Slayer will make their exit has yet to be determined, but it's there, hovering inexorably in the not-too-distant future, as inevitable as death. Their fate is set in stone: when their current world tour ends, so will Slayer.

When they do eventually bow out, the band that formed in suburban Orange County in 1981 will leave an almighty legacy. Slayer can justifiably lay claim to being one of the founding fathers of thrash metal. A band who helped turn it from a feral underground movement into a game-changing force of nature, whose impact can still be heard today. Their records, from 1983's *Show No Mercy* through to 2015's *Repentless*, stand among metal's holy texts.

But one thing towers above everything. Released in October 1986, *Reign In Blood* isn't just Slayer's greatest album, it's also up there with the greatest albums ever made, by any band in any genre; 28 minutes and 58 seconds of unbridled power and undiluted intent that drew awe, acclaim and controversy in equal measure. More than anything else, *Reign In Blood* will be Slayer's legacy.

"We never realised how special it was when we were working on it," guitarist Kerry King says. "We knew it was cool, but we never thought it was what people would talk about for the next thirty years."

Here, King, along with singer/bassist Tom Araya, original drummer Dave Lombardo, producer Rick Rubin and several other friends and contemporaries of Slayer, look back on that landmark album. This is the blow-by-blow story of how *Reign In Blood* changed the world forever.

**By 1985, Metallica had emerged as the leaders of the thrash metal pack. But Slayer weren't that far behind them. Their first two albums – 1983's *Show No Mercy* and 1985's *Hell Awaits*, released on US underground label Metal Blade – proved they weren't content just to exist in the shadow of James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich.**

**Kerry King:** I look back on that time just before *Reign In Blood*, and it was totally exciting being



**"We'd listen to other bands and go: 'That's weak. We could do better than that.'"**

**Dave Lombardo**

a member of Slayer. You'd walk down the street and people would know your face and name. It was weird. It was the only time I got a big head.

**Don Kaye (American metal journalist):**

The first two Slayer albums and the EP [1984's *Haunting The Chapel*] came out on Metal Blade. They were really solid. Everybody was flipping out over them.

**Brian Slagel (owner, Metal Blade Records):**

By the time they got to *Hell Awaits* you could see how much better they were. Especially Dave. He was a phenomenal drummer, and he really upped his game big-time on *Hell Awaits*.

**Tom Araya:** Song-wise, we were writing material that was really heavy – long but heavy. At the time, that's what everybody was doing. We thought: "We can do that." But we were growing all the time.

**Dave Lombardo:** We knew *Hell Awaits* was good, but we were itching to get on to the next thing.

**Tom:** The only thing that we knew about the next album was that it was gonna be faster than *Hell Awaits*.

**The *Hell Awaits* campaign hadn't finished, but Slayer were already planning their next move. They were on friendly terms with their thrash peers, but knew they had it in them to deliver something that would leave them in the dust.**

**Dave:** We were getting cocky. We had already released two albums and been on tour.

**Tom:** Right at the end of the *Hell Awaits* period, Jeff and Kerry were constantly putting ideas together, coming up with new stuff.

**Dave:** Before, we would all sit together and bang out the songs. But Jeff had invested in recording equipment, and he started recording his own demos, complete with the basic drum pattern, guitar riffs, some arrangements. And then he would present us with cassettes. It gave us a clear picture of where he was going.

**Tom:** Jeff had become a fan of a lot of West Coast punk. There was this record store where he'd go a lot and look for album covers. He figured the cooler the cover, the better the band. Then he'd bring it in and play it all the time.

**Dave:** TSOL, Minor Threat, Dead Kennedys, Circle Jerks... Jeff was discovering new bands all the time. It was definitely a turning point.

**Tom:** The last one on the wagon was Kerry – he was more of a metalhead. He didn't understand it at first. Eventually he started to like it – if you get hit in the head with something enough, eventually you start liking it.

**Kerry:** There was a camaraderie between the thrash bands at the time. I'd get the other guys' records, just to see what they were doing.

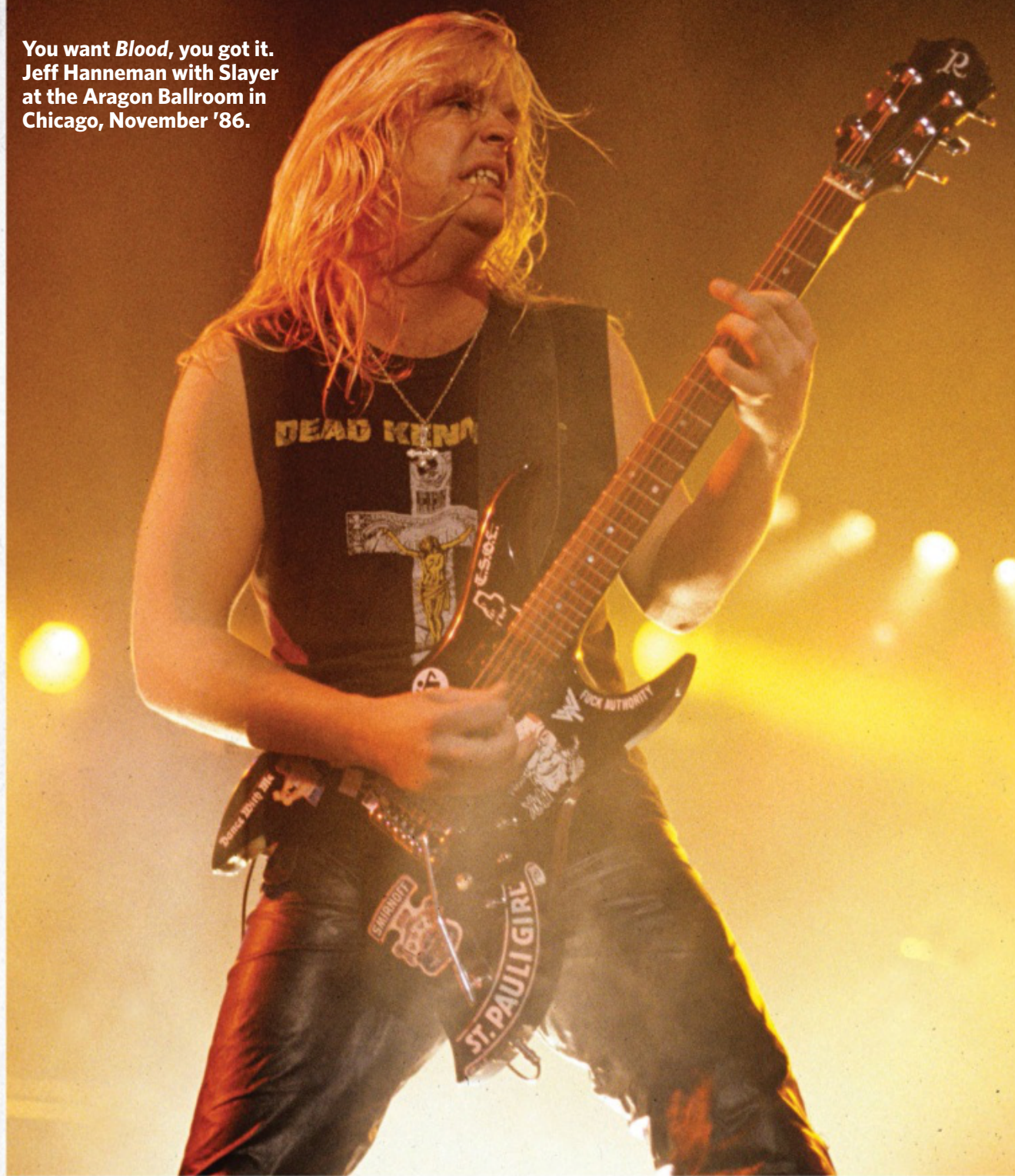
**Dave:** We were keeping tabs on what they were doing. We'd listen to other bands and go: "That's ➤"







You want *Blood*, you got it. Jeff Hanneman with Slayer at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago, November '86.



**“On *Reign In Blood*, the focus was: ‘We want to make the fastest, heaviest record that’s ever been done.’”**

Metal Blade Records owner Brian Slagel

weak. We could do better than that, we’re more brutal than that.”

**Tom:** Everybody else was doing something slow. Kerry and Jeff said that they didn’t want to do a slow record, they wanted to do something fast. They didn’t realise it was gonna be that fast.

**Brian:** On *Reign In Blood*, I think that was the single focus: “We want to make the fastest, heaviest record that’s ever been done.”

It didn’t take long for more clued-in major-label A&R executives to spot thrash metal’s potential. In 1984, Metallica were picked up by Elektra Records, and the following year it was Slayer’s turn to be courted by the big boys.

**Brian Slagel:** Metal Blade were a small little label and the band were getting really big. We knew they were going to sign with a major label, just because it made sense at that point.

**Don:** Metallica had signed to Elektra, but nobody really expected Slayer to get a major deal at the time because they were so heavy.

**Brian:** We had meetings with Capitol, and with Warner Brothers. I think at that point pretty much every label was interested in them, because metal was a big thing happening then. Metallica were starting to really take off.

**Tom:** That’s when we realised that there were record companies that were interested.

**Brian:** Rick Rubin, who was head of Def Jam Records, approached us. Def Jam was a hip-hop label. They’d put out records by Run-DMC and people like that. But Rick was a fan of punk and metal, too.

**Dave:** We had already signed a multi-album deal with Metal Blade. I caught wind of interest of a major label in New York – Columbia – that wanted us. So I told the guys about it and they were, like: “No, Dave, we’re already signed to Metal Blade. It’s too much. We can’t get out of the contract.” I’m like: “Wait. We should check this out and see what they have to say.”

**Rick Rubin:** I first met them at their show at The Ritz in NYC. I knew nothing about them before the show and they blew me away.

**Tom:** Somebody goes: “Hey, I want you to meet Rick Rubin. He’s this guy from Def Jam.” We’re like: “Def Jam?”

**Tom:** It was a little strange, but we knew that he was a fan and that was the extent of it. And that was one of the luckiest things ever – here’s this guy who’s just got a shitload of money from major record labels, and he wants to work with us and he’s a fan. You can’t beat that.

**Brian:** Rick wanted it more than anybody else, and he went after the band hard. He said: “Hey, if you come with me I’ll do this and this and this,” and they chose to go with him.

In June 1986, Slayer entered Hit City West Studios in Los Angeles with Rubin and engineer Andy Wallace to begin work on what would become *Reign In Blood*. Rubin’s vision for the album was to boil everything down to the bone, capturing the playing live and stripping it of unnecessary reverb.

**Dave:** The studio was just a little place on Pico and La Cienega Boulevard. It wasn’t elaborate.

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people in all my life,” he tells Fox Sports Radio. “The letters, the faxes, the phone calls from everybody in the metal community: ‘Rob, we just don’t care. We want you to be who you are.’”

**APRIL 13, 1999**

**Metallica** ban their own fans. Blind-sided by the nascent file-sharing website **Napster** – and the revelation that Metallica’s entire catalogue is up for grabs – Lars Ulrich goes on the attack, seeking \$100,000 per copyright

violation and demanding that 335,000 Napster users are banned. “People used the word ‘greed’ all the time, which was so bizarre,” he reflects. “The whole thing was about one thing and one thing only – control.”

**APRIL 20, 1999**

**Marilyn Manson** is blamed for the Columbine High School Massacre. After teenagers Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris run amok in Colorado,

shooting dead 12 pupils and a teacher, the media links their killing spree with the shock-metal king’s supposedly youth-corrupting music. Although it emerges that the pair are not Manson fans, the singer becomes America’s public enemy (“The Columbine era destroyed my entire career at the time,” he says).



**OCTOBER 17, 2000**  
**Limp Bizkit** give nu

**‘The first bloom of nu metal is widely acknowledged as Korn’s self-titled 1994 debut album.’**

metal a bad name. The first bloom of nu metal is widely acknowledged as **Korn**’s self-titled 1994 debut album, an adventurous collage of nihilist vocals and down-tuned seven-string guitars. But by the turn of the century, the scene’s poster boy is Fred Durst, touting Limp Bizkit’s *Chocolate Starfish And The Hotdog Flavored Water*, and even boring himself. “There was a monster living out there,” he later admits, “and he had a red cap on.”





**Tom:** We were a bunch of young kids. We didn't really have anyone working with us. We brought our own stuff in, we set up our own stuff. It was us and my brother John, who came in and set up all our gear and mic'd it up for us. But this was our first record with someone that was a pro.

**Dave:** Andy Wallace was there. He's an amazing engineer. He had a very Zen-like personality. He was very mellow, a very nice guy. He wasn't a party animal or anything. He basically held the fort when Rubin wasn't there.

**Brian:** There's a couple songs that had actually almost ended up on *Hell Awaits*. *Altar Of Sacrifice* was one of them. You could kind of see the early makings of where that record was going.

**Rick Rubin:** What surprised me most was that Jeff and Kerry both knew which solos were good and which weren't, since at the time, none of the solos made sense to me. It's as if they were speaking a different musical language than the rest of the world.

**Dave:** The sessions used to start very late – ten or eleven o'clock – and would go to the early hours of the morning. I honestly don't know why. The Witching Hour, maybe [laughs]. Midnight to three in the morning was the best time to conjure the most evil.

**Kerry:** What else were we fuelled by? Nothing. I didn't even drink yet. It wasn't a party.

**Dave:** We were so well-rehearsed before we went into the studio. I believe I recorded my tracks in three or four days. There were no computers, no software. It was well-rehearsed: get your tempo down, press 'record' and don't fuck up.

**Tom:** Rubin tweaked our guitar sounds. Other than that, we just kept recording until he said: "I got that one."

**Kerry:** Somebody said: "You don't need reverb to



Slaying it: Kerry King, Jeff Hanneman and Tom Araya pose for the press in 1987.

be good." Once we got that in our heads, we were like: "Okay, that's pretty fucking tight."

**Rick Rubin:** It's very close to being a live album, very well recorded in a studio. Slayer didn't sound like anyone else, that's why the album sounds different than other metal albums. They really were creating their own genre.

**The 10 tracks that made up *Reign In Blood* lived up to Slayer's ambition of being faster and more brutal than any other band. They dialled back *Hell Awaits'* satanic shtick in favour of a lyrical approach that was one part gruesome medical textbook, one part Hieronymus Bosch painting – most notably on instantly iconic opening track *Angel Of Death*, which was inspired by the infamous Nazi surgeon Dr Josef Mengele.**

**Tom:** Did I have any problem singing the lyrics on *Angel Of Death*? No. When Jeff brought in the song, we thought: "Wow, that's really cool – this was the guy that did all those crazy, terrible things."

**Dave:** It was: "Let's be brutal. Let's be evil, dark." I thought it was great.

**Tom:** As usual, we always end up finishing a song in the studio, while we're in the process of doing it. On that [album] it was *Raining Blood*. That was the song that didn't have any lyrics.

**Kerry:** I remember finishing the lyrics to *Raining Blood* in the lobby of the studio. I think Jeff was doing some of the tracks inside. He had no ideas for the part I was working on, so it was like: "Here, let me try." I finished it.

**Dave:** I think my favourite point on the album is *Postmortem* into *Raining Blood*. That piece is monstrous. It's epic how it flows from one song to the other.

**Tom:** The only thing was that we told Dave to speed it up – "Hey Dave, c'mon, speed it up, pick it up a bit!"

**Dave:** Rubin and the band were saying: "Let's push a little more... a little more aggressive... get angry."

**Tom:** All ten songs came in at twenty-eight minutes. A full album, contractually, constitutes at least forty-five minutes of music. I asked Rick if that was okay. His only reply to any of that was: "It's ten songs, which constitutes an album. There's verses and leads and choruses." He didn't have an issue with it, which was really cool. ➤

**"Slayer didn't sound like anyone else. They really were creating their own genre."**

Producer Rick Rubin

MAIN: DAVID PLASTIK/ICONPIX; INSET: ALEX SOLCA/ICONPIX

**SEPTEMBER 22, 2001**

**System Of A Down**

soundtrack 9/11. On the heels of **Linkin Park's** all-conquering *Hybrid Theory*, the Armenian-American alt. metallers storm the US chart in the midst of the 9/11 terror attacks. Even so, the febrile atmosphere of the time causes ructions, with standout single *Chop Suey!* deemed "lyrically questionable" and blacklisted by the Clear Channel memo, and bassist Shavo Odadjian



attacked by Michigan venue security in an ethnically motivated incident.

**MAY 31 & JUNE 1, 2003**

**Download Festival** debuts. The yawning hole left by Monsters Of Rock is filled by a new two-day, twin-stage event at Donington Park, headlined by **Iron Maiden**, **Audioslave**, **Marilyn Manson** and Billy Corgan's short-lived **Zwan**. A fresh-faced Darkness also prop up the bill.

**DECEMBER 8, 2004**

**Dimebag Darrell** murdered on stage in Ohio. The metal community is shattered by news of the Pantera and Damageplan guitarist's fatal shooting by crazed fan Nathan Gale at the Alrosa Villa club in Columbus. Metal to the last, Darrell will be buried in a Kiss Kasket with Eddie Van Halen's original 'Bumblebee' '79 Charvel guitar.

**11 JUNE, 2005**

**Trivium** lead the new wave at

Download. Although festival-goers have to squint to spot the Florida thrash-metallers at the foot of Saturday's Main Stage bill, their star-making set draws on breakthrough second album *The Ascendancy* and sparks predictions of Metallica-sized world domination. A decade later, frontman Matt Heafy reflects: "This is the country that started it all off."

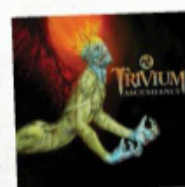
**MAY 20, 2006**

**Lordi** win Eurovision in

Athens. Triumphant in full monster regalia, the Finnish collective are the first metal act to win the contest, with *Hard Rock Hallelujah*. Host Terry Wogan gives a bemused sigh: "Every year I expect it to be less foolish, and every year it is more so."

**DECEMBER 10, 2007**

**Led Zeppelin** reunite in London. The great and good of metal flock to the O2 Arena to watch a reunited



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Slayer backstage at the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago on the *Reign In Blood* Tour, November 1986: (l-r) Kerry King, Dave Lombardo, Jeff Hanneman, Tom Araya.

**Rick Rubin might not have had a problem with the album, but somebody else certainly did. Def Jam's releases were distributed by Columbia Records, whose president, Walter Yetnikoff, objected to *Angel Of Death*. Yetnikoff, who was Jewish, viewed the song as anti-Semitic, and refused to release the album unless the opening track was pulled. Slayer refused.**

**Tom:** All of a sudden, the record company doesn't want to release the album. We were like: "Fuuuuuck."

**Kerry:** I didn't know shit about the world at that point. I thought: "That is the most ridiculous thing I have ever heard."

**Dave:** When Rubin told us that Columbia were backing out, he said: "Guys, don't worry about it. I have another company. This is kind of cool. We could spin it in a way that it could be of advantage to us."

**Kerry:** The funny thing is that it was already paid for: "All you gotta do is market it, it's gonna sell." The world's a weird place.

**Dave:** It turned out that Geffen were happy to put the record out.

**Rick:** Geffen were anxious to be in business with us because of all of the success we were having at Def Jam [with hip-hop bands].

**Dave:** We just followed Rick and what he wanted to do. And, sure enough, it did work to our advantage, because it created a lot of mystery around the album. People were curious.

**Don:** I don't actually remember mainstream magazines covering Slayer at the time at all. The only coverage they got in *Rolling Stone* was when Columbia Records refused to distribute the album because of *Angel Of Death*.

**The pre-release controversy served only to ramp up anticipation for *Reign In Blood*. As did the fact that no new music had leaked out on to the tape-trading circuit in advance.**

**When the album was released in the US on October 7, 1986, it was like a thunderclap.**

**Don:** I remember a few people voicing the opinion that *Hell Awaits* was a bit too progressive. Everybody just wanted pure speed from Slayer, and *Hell Awaits* got into time changes, longer songs. So there was

certainly some reservation and curiosity about what about what they were going to do next."

**Brian:** I was blown away. It was certainly a lot different than *Hell Awaits*. That had slow stuff and heavy stuff, a lot of different dynamics. This was pretty much just pounding your head in for twenty-nine minutes."

**Kerry:** At that point there was no internet, of course. People would say: "You've got to listen to

this band, you've got to see this band." That's how people did things.

**Slayer kicked off their *Reign In Blood* tour on Halloween 1986 at the Moore Theater in Seattle. The support band was New Jersey's Overkill, who'd released their debut album, *Feel The Fire*, a year earlier.**

**Rick Sales (Slayer's manager):** I had just come off an extensive tour road-managing Dokken, and I got a call to go out with Slayer a couple of weeks later on their *Reign In Blood* tour. I was tired, and turned it down. A friend of mine called me the next day and told me I should reconsider. As tired as I was, I went out and got a copy of *Reign In Blood*, and I was hooked. I wanted to be their tour manager, so I took the job.

**Bobby 'Blitz' Ellsworth (Overkill singer):** Overkill opened for them on that tour. We show up in Seattle, and we're so excited. And we came out in front of Slayer to a hail of wet paper towels, Zippo lighters and coins thrown at us. The Slayer audience is a tough audience. It's like, don't stop moving and you're less of a target.

**Rick Sales:** I saw the frenzy of the music and of the audience – it was a religious experience. It was the most exciting rock show I'd seen since I was a kid and went to see Iggy And The Stooges and MC5. Slayer had an energy, a kind of punk energy.

**Bobby:** We played a place called The Forum, in Los Angeles. It was this old building from the nineteen-thirties or forties. I remember somebody falling out of the balcony during Slayer's set. It wasn't a push, it was purposeful. It was his way of showing his exhilaration.

**"They were committed to their art, it was twenty-four-seven for them."**

**Slayer manager Rick Sales**





Taking metal where it had never been before: Tom Araya and Kerry King.

**Dave:** They would clear the venue, and you'd take a walk through afterwards and there'd be pools of blood. It wasn't just a few little drops here and there, it was like somebody had laid there and bled for a while. It was intense.

**Bobby:** Sure, those gigs were violent. But it wasn't as if the violence escalated, it was as if someone just pushed a button. You didn't see the crowd get whipped into this frenzy, the frenzy was instantaneous.

**Kerry:** After that we toured as the support to WASP. Those guys were bigger than us at that point. They weren't nice to us. "You can't have lights, you can't have a smoke machine." "What? Are you scared of us?"

**Tom:** I think it was on the WASP tour that Dave quit for the first time.

**Kerry:** I don't remember why he quit. I think it was probably just a young, growing-up misunderstanding.

**Dave:** I had been going on tour, and I was coming back with no money to pay my basic bills. I was like: "Fuck this, man. I'm not going to put all my fucking effort into this if we're signed to a major label and going out on these extravagant tours and I'm coming home with no money?" It just didn't make sense right now. So I decided to split.

**Tom:** We got Tony [Scaglione, from thrashers Whiplash] in to do the rest of the WASP tour.

**Dave:** I remember Rick Rubin calling me practically every other day: "How are you doing? Are you going back?" No, no, man. "Come on,

Dave, go back. Let's work something out." And then when I finally decided, "Yeah, let's work this out", Rubin flew down and he picked me up and we went to rehearsal and he reintroduced me to the guys. We swept whatever was under the rug and carried on.

**Reign In Blood peaked at No.47 in the UK album chart and No.94 in the US Billboard chart – an impressive feat for such an extreme record. It might not have had the same groundbreaking commercial impact as Metallica's blockbuster Master Of Puppets, but it took thrash metal to a new level of uncompromising brutality. More than 30 years on, it stands as a benchmark for what metal can and should be.**

**Don:** *Reign In Blood* didn't feel like an evolutionary step so much as setting a new bar for everything that was going to follow. You're either going to try and match it or top it, or you're going to go in other directions.

**Tom:** Why was it successful? I can't answer that. Maybe it could be that Rick Rubin did it and it came out on a rap label. Maybe it was the controversy. Maybe it was because it was only twenty-eight minutes – everybody else was doing really slow stuff. I don't know.

**Rick Sales:** They were committed to their art, it was twenty-four-seven for them. It wasn't: "How do we become famous and get gold records?" It

was strictly: "We're going to make the music we want to, and if people don't like it, fuck 'em."

**Rick Rubin:** It's so extreme and at times non-musical... it's like an assault. I can't think of another album that does what this album does.

**Don:** My sense is that other bands knew they couldn't top it, and were just going to try to do their own sort of variations on intensity and speed.

## "Reign In Blood set a new bar for everything that was going to follow."

Metal journalist Don Kaye

**Brian:** That record, even more so than Metallica, took extreme and super-heavy metal out to the mainstream kids. It led the way for Pantera and so many other bands who had success. But that was the most extreme record that ever had a massive commercial success. It paved the way for everybody

from Cannibal Corpse to Pantera.

**Tom:** My parents were always telling me that I should find a job, maybe go to school, learn something. That way, if all this failed, I wouldn't find myself out on the street doing nothing. By the time *Reign In Blood* came out, they realised that we were actually getting somewhere. They were proud.

**Dave:** People come up and talk to me about *Reign In Blood* in the most random places. People yell out: "Slayer!" or come up and say: "Reign In Blood saved my life." I hear that a lot. Although the music may have been intense and violent, people have told me that it's helped them navigate the most horrible times of their lives. That's just special. **1**





# VORSPRUNG DURCH TECHNIK

That phrase, which translates as 'advancement through technology' could have been coined for **Rammstein**, who over the past 25 years have defied conventional wisdom and become superstars.

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Words: **Stephen Dalton**

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maximalist spectacle to new heights of excess-all-areas showmanship.

Rammstein's ascent to stadium-rocking notoriety has been eased along the way by celebrity champions including Trent Reznor and David Lynch. But it has not always been a smooth ride. Their fondness for ambiguous totalitarian imagery, hard-core sex and violent subject matter has seen the band censored, banned and attacked in the media. A casual observer might dismiss them as professional edgelords who are, quite literally, playing with fire to generate cheap click-bait controversy. But there is logic and poetry behind the band's avant-punk anarchy, backed up by a deep cultural hinterland and a heavy dose of black humour. When Rammstein make political statements, they mostly take aim at worthy enemies, not easy targets. With great power comes great responsibility, ideally with the added bonus of weapons-grade pyrotechnics.

Like Angela Merkel, the Trabant car and pickled gherkins, Rammstein are one of pre-unification Communist East Germany's most enduring cultural gifts to the world. All six members – singer Till Lindemann, lead guitarist Richard Z Kruspe, rhythm guitarist Paul Landers, keyboard player Christian 'Flake' Lorenz, bassist Oliver Riedel and drummer Christoph Schneider – grew up behind the Iron Curtain in the workers' paradise of the DDR, Soviet Russia's most ruthlessly efficient satellite state. In their teens and twenties, they risked regular harassment and arrest by playing in dissident art-punk bands with names like Feeling B, Elegante Chaos, First arsch and Orgasm Death Gimmick. They came together as Rammstein only after the fall of the Berlin Wall, in 1994, but their attitude to censorship and authority was shaped back in the Eastern Bloc. Their use of ironic humour, taboo themes and totalitarian imagery makes much more sense in this political context.

Being from the Communist East was also a key factor in Rammstein's bold but commercially risky decision to sing in their native German language, unlike most of their West German rock peers. Having been taught Russian rather than English at school, like all East German children, former drummer and teenage swimming champion Lindemann felt more comfortable sticking with his mother tongue.

"The German lyrics were simpler and sounded harder," Lindemann explained to *Rolling Stone* magazine in 2014. "The German illustrated the music better than the English did, with its soft vowels. Besides, this was in the time of crossover-grunge. Only long-haired blondes, dreadlocks and second-rate Rage Against The Machine and Nirvana copycats were in every club. We sure didn't want that."

Full of brutal poetry, double meanings, deadpan humour and sly literary allusions, Rammstein anthems such as *Du Hast*, *Ich Will* and *Mein Herz Brennt* only really make sense in German.

"I saw a lot of East German bands that sung in very bad English, to people who didn't understand English," Lorenz recalled in *Metal Hammer* earlier this year. "It was really stupid. But if you really

want to tell your emotions, you have to speak in your mother tongue."

Emerging as part of mid-90s Neue Deutsche Härte (New German Hardness) movement, Rammstein's thunderous, electronically charged, groove-driven alt.metal sound initially marked them out as Teutonic cousins of Nine Inch Nails or Marilyn Manson. Signed by the German indie label Motor Records, they scored only modest success with their 1995 debut album *Herzeleid*. Their profile enjoyed a bigger boost two years later when Trent Reznor showcased them on the soundtrack to David Lynch's surreal turbo-noir thriller *Lost Highway*, which helped propel their second album, 1997's *Sehnsucht*, to international cult hit status.

But it was their increasingly ambitious, cinematic live shows that really cemented Rammstein's burgeoning reputation as a must-see band, with flamethrowers, wild costumes and high-voltage theatricality part of their overall package right from the early days. Lindemann even underwent training as a qualified pyrotechnician, and began incorporating flamethrowers and fire stunts into his performance. Ironically, the singer first embraced his twisted firestarter side as a way of coping with his essential shyness.

"I wasn't really happy on stage," he explained

**"If you really want to tell your emotions, you have to speak in your mother tongue."**

**Christian 'Flake' Lorenz**

to *Rolling Stone*. "I wore sunglasses, as I couldn't stand the stares. I had stage fright and thought: 'What am I doing here at all?' I used to be a drummer, and then I always had something to do. Now, I was standing there, up front, and everyone was staring at me. It was uncomfortable for me, so I wanted to compensate for that somehow. That's where

the fire came into play."

At the end of the 90s, Rammstein signed a major record deal with Universal Music and began scoring high-charting hits in Germany. They also enlisted Berlin-based Nicolai Sabottka as their production manager and special-effects expert. Tasked with supplying the band with cutting-edge visual stunts, Sabottka now has a team of engineers and an entire pyrotechnics factory in Montana at his disposal. In 2001 the band hired lighting and production designer LeRoy Bennett, whose prestige clients already included Nine Inch Nails and Marilyn Manson. Bennet designed outlandish stage sets like the giant uterus that opened the tour for the *Mutter* album, the band's 2001 major-label debut.

Bennet's stage designs for Rammstein have since grown in scale and ambition, with split-level science-fiction megastructures that recall *Metropolis*, *Blade Runner* and HR Giger's biomechanical designs for *Alien*. The band have also ventured far beyond their original none-more-black hard-rock warrior clobber, with heroically high-camp stage outfits ranging from glittering angel's wings, to fluffy pink fleeces, to matching lederhosen which look both mockingly Germanic and gloriously homoerotic.

All this overblown pageantry can be both

**T**he irresistible rise of Rammstein over the past 25 years has been one of heavy metal's most unlikely, hilarious and misunderstood success stories.

These enigmatic East Berliners rarely give interviews, steadfastly sing in their native German, and often face condemnation for their purposely provocative use of transgressive taboo imagery. Even so, with more than 10 million album sales, Rammstein have slowly blossomed into the most successful German-language band ever, with a reputation for explosively exciting live shows which fall somewhere between Wagnerian operas and cyberpunk torture-porn carnivals. Their current international stadium tour is their biggest yet, pushing their orgiastic sado-





**Burning ambition: Rammstein in 1998 on the Family Values tour. Inset: on the video shoot for *Mein Land*.**



a strength and weakness for Rammstein, who often face criticism that razzle-dazzle spectacle takes precedence over musical prowess.

"I don't want to be another Kiss, where people talk about make-up and stuff like that and no one talks about the music" guitarist Richard Z Kruspe told *Metal Hammer* in 2018. "We do have a sense of humour, we do laugh about it, we have fun... but we're not Spinal Tap. We take the music and the lyrics seriously."

Speaking to *Rolling Stone* in 2014, Lindemann admitted: "The band is divided on this issue. It's too much like a circus act for some, they would rather have the music be more of the focus. Then there are people like me, who have great aspirations in these elements of the show, in the tinsel and the glitz, in the action and the fire." In the same interview, he argues that Rammstein's weapons of mass distraction have been crucial to their enduring success: "When it comes to other bands, you really have to be a hard-core fan to be content with looking at a couple of guys in jeans and T-shirts playing through their set list for two hours."

Speaking to the *Independent* in 2017, guitarist Paul Landers admitted: "Sometimes the show overshadows the music, and we try to not let that happen. But the music is very good in my eyes, and we try to have a balance between both. If

you meet a nice woman with blonde hair and big boobs, you might start talking to her because of her appearance, but then you find out that she is clever and funny and kind-hearted. We are trying in Rammstein to be the blonde with a brain."

**G**rowing up in a repressive police state like East Germany left a lasting impression on Rammstein. Questioning authority, defying official media and pushing against the norms of good taste are the classic traits of dissident

## "We do laugh about it... but we're not Spinal Tap. We take the music and the lyrics seriously."

**Richard Z Kruspe**

artists in totalitarian regimes. Even the band's name, which alludes to the Ramstein air-show disaster of 1988 that left 70 people dead, is a deliberately punky affront against tasteful propriety.

"Part of the reason Rammstein were so progressive is that we felt so much censorship back in the day," Krespe said earlier this year. "In Rammstein, we were trying to get rid of all kind of censorship – from other people and from ourselves too. I think that's why we all went:

"What the fuck, we don't care."

According to Landers, Rammstein "like being on the fringes of bad taste". Lorenz has also claimed that "the controversy is fun, like stealing forbidden fruit. But it serves a purpose."

This take-no-prisoners attitude to free speech is admirable in many ways, but it has landed the band in hot water many times. After the 1999 Columbine High School massacre in Colorado, it emerged that one of the killers, Eric Harris, was a Rammstein fan. When the band were lambasted in the German media, they responded with an official statement of condolence to the victims, but added that they "wish to make it clear that they have no lyrical content or political beliefs that could have possibly influenced such behaviour. Additionally, members of Rammstein have children of their own, in whom they continually strive to instil healthy and non-violent values."

Rammstein's music has also been linked to the 2004 Beslan hostage siege in Russia, the 2007 Jokela school shooting in Finland, and more. Lindemann concedes that damaged people with warped views are often drawn to extreme music, but he has little sympathy with any 'blame the artist' arguments for real-world violence.

"If there are radical feelings in people, anything can wake them," Lindemann told *Rolling Stone*. "A painting, a picture, whatever. It's just a coincidence that it happened to be our music. It's important to think about what caused them to make their decisions, how they became animals, not their taste in music."

More controversially, Rammstein have long been dogged by accusations of neo-Nazi sympathies, largely because of the quasi-fascistic and militaristic imagery in their visuals and lyrics. These suspicions came to a head in 1998 when the band released a video for their cover version of Depeche Mode's *Stripped*, which featured footage from Nazi film director Leni Riefenstahl's 1938 documentary *Olympia*, about the 1936 Berlin Olympics. After playing on MTV for a week, the

continued from page 47

Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones, plus drummer Jason Bonham, smash through a set of classics in memory of Atlantic Records boss Ahmet Ertegun. Fans clamour for a full tour, but Percy isn't having it. "Touring with the Sensational Space Shifters is so much better than bathing in a tepid bathtub of old hits," he says.

**DECEMBER 20, 2009**

**Rage Against The Machine** beat *The X Factor*. Simon Cowell's singles-chart

stranglehold is loosened by what one retailer calls "possibly the greatest upset ever", as fans of the rap-metallers send *Killing In The Name* to the Christmas No.1 spot ahead of Joe McElderry's *The Climb*. Frontman Zack De La Rocha hails "an incredible organic grass-roots campaign" for toppling "a sterile pop monopoly".

**JUNE 16, 2010**

Thrash's Big Four play together for the first time. Despite the historical bad

blood – mostly between Dave Mustaine, Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield – the Sonisphere Festival in Poland pulls off the coup of the post-millennium, assembling a bill of **Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth and Anthrax**. "Who would have ever



thought the four of us getting together would be important enough to have eighty thousand people

**'Despite historical bad blood, thrash's Big Four play together for the first time, at Sonisphere in Poland.'**

show up in Poland?" muses Slayer guitarist Kerry King.

**JUNE 19, 2013**

**Black Sabbath** (finally) rule America. Remarkably, their closest brush with US chart glory has been 1971's *Master Of Reality* (US No.7). Now, their swansong album, *13*, flies to the summit. "It was Geezer who emailed from LA to tell me," says Iommi. "I was in the garden, actually, and I went in and had a bottle of champagne with my wife."



video was pulled following a storm of protest.

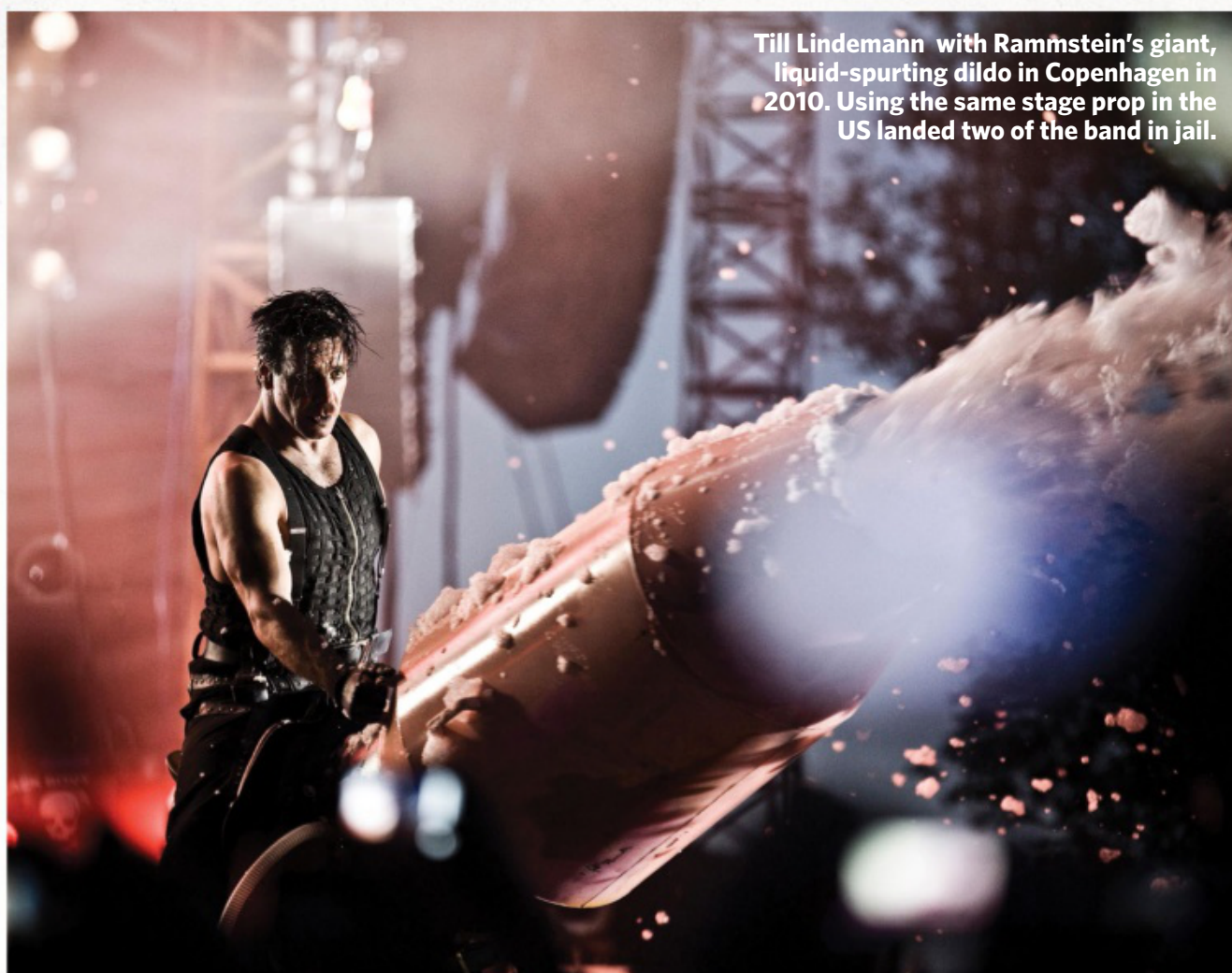
A little disingenuously, Rammstein professed shock at the angry reaction to *Stripped*, which betrays a certain naivety at least. Ironically, they had originally planned to use vintage Soviet propaganda footage for the video, which looked strikingly similar to Riefenstahl's Nazi-era material.

"Everyone went crazy," Lindemann recalled to *Rolling Stone*. "There were commentaries and articles. Then foreign musicians came along; I won't mention names, but they felt aggravated by it and wanted to have us shot, including Tim Renner, our label boss. That was a bad situation. It was on MTV for a whole week until the trouble began... But I think it's a great video. Whether we would do it again is another thing."

Naive mistake or deliberate provocation, Rammstein reacted to the *Stripped* scandal by embracing less ambivalent visual and lyrical imagery. In 2001 they released *Links 2-3-4*, which borrows from a famous East German propaganda song written by Communist playwright Bertholt Brecht. "If you want to put us in a political category, we're on the left side," Kruspe told *Grand Rapids Press* in 2006. "That's the reason we made the song". Their later videos have featured a more racially mixed cast, while their recent anti-anthem *Deutschland* cast a critical eye on flag-waving patriotism.

Far from flirting with Nazi chic, several Rammstein members retain a strong attachment to the communal left-wing ethos of East Germany, where fascism was the darkest taboo. "We have grown up as socialists," Lindemann told *Rolling Stone*. "We used to be either punks or goths; we hate Nazis! We are coming from an entirely different culture. We used to beat up those right-wing morons, and we still would today."

Rammstein may have become more cautious with political symbolism in recent years, but the group remain reliably filthy with their graphic sexual images on stage and screen. In 1999, Lindemann and Lorenz spent a night in jail after being arrested on obscenity grounds for deploying a liquid-spurting dildo on stage in Worcester, Massachusetts. In 2009, the band's sixth studio album, *Liebe ist für Alle Da*, was effectively banned after it was temporarily placed on a special Index by the German government department in charge of protecting minors from harmful media content. The lyrics and imagery around two songs, *Ich Tu Dir Weh* and *Pussy*, were singled out for allegedly promoting BDSM and unprotected sex. The latter even came with a NSFW video directed by frequent collaborator Jonas Akerlund, which featured body doubles for Rammstein engaging in hard-core sex with porn stars. Tellingly, it gave the



Till Lindemann with Rammstein's giant, liquid-spurting dildo in Copenhagen in 2010. Using the same stage prop in the US landed two of the band in jail.

band their first German Number One.

The ban on *Liebe ist für Alle Da* was soon overturned, but not until after 85,000 copies had been destroyed or re-pressed. In 2016, Rammstein launched a belated lawsuit against the German government seeking €66,000 in compensation. "We deemed the reason as absurd, but it wasn't a laughing matter to us," Lorenz said. "It only means annoyance when an album is put on the Index. The albums have to be re-pressed. We were approached about it all the time, when really all we wanted was to keep touring in peace. *Pussy* was supposed to be a funny party song, not a provocation."

If anything, Rammstein's sexually provocative antics have only become bolder in recent years. Their 2013 world tour featured a giant penis-shaped foam cannon and scenes of simulated buggery between Lindemann and Lorenz. These hilarious acts of absurdist theatre earned the band threats of arrest in Russia, where LGBT rights have suffered under Putin's authoritarian regime. In a daring act of defiance, two members of Rammstein shared a same-sex

kiss on stage at their most recent Moscow show in July, sticking two fingers up to anti-gay oppression. In case it is not clear by now, these are not the actions of a band with fascist sympathies, more like stadium-sized acts of 21st-century punk subversion.

In May this year, Rammstein released their first new studio album in a decade, an untitled

collection informally named after the band. It topped the chart with record-breaking double-platinum sales in their native Germany, peaked at No.3 in Britain and scored the band their first ever US Top 10.

Stretching into 2020, Rammstein's current stadium tour is their grandest to date (see

review, p113), and has earned rapturous reviews for its blockbuster theatrical excess. After decades as the most subversive, spectacular and misunderstood avant-metal band in the world, Rammstein have finally cracked the superstar mainstream on their own terms. It appears that quaint old East German proverb still holds true. Life is a flame-grilled porno-punk cabaret, old chum. 🍷

## "Part of the reason Rammstein were so progressive is that we felt so much censorship back in the day."

Richard Z Kruspe

### DECEMBER 28, 2015

**Lemmy** dies. The unthinkable happens, as Motörhead's assumed-to-be-immortal frontman succumbs to prostate cancer, cardiac arrhythmia and congestive heart failure just days after diagnosis. "He took the news better than all of us," says manager Todd Singerman.

### JANUARY 4, 2016

**Guns N' Roses** bury the hatchet. Despite all the mud slung between the classic GN'R line-up ("Personally,

**'Slipknot top the transatlantic album charts, reaffirming heavy metal's potency in the modern age.'**

I consider Slash a cancer and better removed," Axl Rose says in 2009), news breaks that the singer, guitarist and bassist Duff McKagan will reunite to headline Coachella festival in California. "The real success was to get back in a room together," says Slash. "That black cloud of animosity that had perpetuated through the entire time we were apart... to get past all that."



### FEBRUARY 4, 2017

**Black Sabbath** sign off in Birmingham. Metal's founding fathers end their career in the city where it began, with an encore of *Paranoid*. But they leave a chink of light, with Iommi stating that he would consider reuniting for the city's 2022 Commonwealth Games, and Osbourne expressing regret that drummer Bill Ward was

absent: "It should have been the four of us ending it. Maybe one day there'll be one last gig."

### AUGUST 19, 2019

**Slipknot** top the transatlantic album charts. Two decades after their debut, the masked Iowans beat Ed Sheeran and Drake in the UK and US album charts with sixth release *We Are Not Your Kind*, reaffirming metal's potency in the modern age. 🍷







# 50 YEARS, 50 TRACKS

## THE ULTIMATE HEAVY METAL PLAYLIST

As we celebrate the 50 years of heavy metal, here's half a century's worth of pioneering heavy music, from the classics to the contemporary hard-hitters.

Words: **Geoff Barton, Malcolm Dome, Lee Dorrian, Ian Fortnam, Paul Henderson, Dave Ling, Siân Llewellyn, Scott Rowley, Jonathan Selzer, Henry Yates**

### Black Sabbath

**BLACK SABBATH** 1970

It began with the dank drubbing of rain and the distant toll of a church bell. Then, with the mood established, the Sabs opened their studio account, Tony Iommi's funeral-pace riff humming with sin and Ozzy Osbourne's spooky observations of a 'figure in black which points at me' still making you check over your shoulder. Metal was born, right here.

### Master Heartache

**SIR LORD BALTIMORE** 1970

Drummer/vocalist John Garner wasn't messing around; he sounds like a man seriously damaged by affairs of the heart on this rip-roaring, guitar-freaking killer.

### Guts

**BUDGIE** 1971

The bludgeoning low-end bass of Burke Shelley combined with the slow, Sabbathian groove of *Guts* makes this song a must-inclusion in the collection of any heavy hairy freak.

### The Ripper

**JUDAS PRIEST** 1976

The future of metal was changing, and this band were going to be at the forefront of it. They may not have realised it at the time, but Rob Halford's vocals would go on to influence a future generation of screamers. A heavy metal shock of the very best kind.

### Ace Of Spades

**MOTÖRHEAD** 1980

Steppenwolf might have sung about 'heavy



**WASP: tested the boundaries of metal's decency and found them wanting.**



metal thunder' first, but the song that illustrates it best has got to be Lemmy's relentless ode to cards, dice and dancing with the Devil. Gambling may be for fools, but with a soundtrack like this, it's the way we like it, baby...

### Back In Black

**AC/DC** 1980

With a riff that launched a thousand identi-riffs, the title track of AC/DC's first record with Brian Johnson at the mic was a terrifying statement of intent. The chord stabs can't be argued with, and Angus vows us with two guitar solos. As a metal anthem it's oft copied, never bettered.

### Last Caress

**MISFITS** 1980

'I got something to say, I killed your baby today...' A Dave Vanian-style vocal, plus a Ramones-style backing track and a handful of very sick lyrics, and horror-punk is born. Future

members of Metallica and GN'R vow to cover Misfits songs when they grow up.

### Wheels Of Steel

**SAXON** 1980

The Barnsley stormers shook up the NWOBHM with this strident track which harked back to the golden age of Motörhead and AC/DC. It also had a contemporary sound, thanks in part to an in-yr-face production that enhanced its overall power.

### Crazy Train

**OZZY OSBOURNE** 1980

Having been ousted from Black Sabbath, Ozzy went on to release a debut solo single that proved he was still worthy of his Prince Of Darkness title. Teaming up with guitarist Randy Rhoads, *Crazy Train* fused a bass line reminiscent of *Papa Was A Rolling Stone* with one of metal's greatest guitar solos.

### Black Metal

**VENOM** 1982

Geordie guttersnipes Venom somehow contrived to invent not one but two all-new music genres: death metal and (as heard on this stomach-turning track) black metal. No one had ever heard music like this before. No one ever wanted to again. But, inspired by the antics of Cronos and co, hundreds of like-minded bands would soon spew forth.

### Number Of The Beast

**IRON MAIDEN** 1982

The title track of the first Maiden album to feature Bruce Dickinson on vocals set the metal template that the Irons would take to record-breaking levels over the following decades. Adrian Smith and Dave Murray's interlocking six-strings showed the world that twin-guitar bands didn't have to sound like Thin Lizzy, while Dickinson's air-raided siren howl and 'Arny's thunderous bass sealed the deal.

### Am I Evil?

**DIAMOND HEAD** 1982

Made internationally popular by Metallica, this track is oddly one of the foundations on which the thrash genre was built. Oddly? Yep, because Diamond Head owed more to Led Zep than to Motörhead. However, *Am I Evil?*, with its pace, power and dark intent, would be the blueprint for much that was to happen in the 80s.

### Creatures Of The Night

**KISS** 1982

Kiss had lost their way somewhat over the previous few years, but this put them right back on track as one of the greatest anthemic bands of all time. Here was a song with a mighty riff and a massive chorus, reinvigorating their appeal to the metal audience both new and old.

### Holy Diver

**DIO** 1983

After successful spells with Rainbow and Sabbath, Ronnie James Dio strode out on his own, making a formidable statement with



the title track of the first Dio album. It encapsulated everything that had made his name – articulate lyrics, a mythically inspired melody, a soaring vocal plus a stirring guitar.

### Rock You Like A Hurricane SCORPIONS 1984

Without a doubt this is the defining song of the unsquashable German band's lengthy history. It's a bold, powerhouse march, mixing a potent tune with intense musicianship – one of those songs that helped to give big-hair music such a massive chart-busting boost.

### Animal (Fuck Like A Beast) WASP 1984

There's no trace of misty-eyed romanticism here as WASP turn the act of making lurve into a base, animalistic affair. *Fuck Like A Beast* tested the boundaries of metal's decency and found them wanting. The irony was that when *Kerrang!* featured Blackie Lawless on its cover, WH Smith banned the issue because the singer was covered in blood – not because he was promoting the use of the F-word.

### Eighties KILLING JOKE 1984

Killing Joke put the titanic might of Zeppelin and the riff-propelled metal doom of Sabbath through a hyper-cranked punk'n'funk filter to create a roaring apocalyptic holocaust. Latterly, Kurt Cobain translated its signature, grunge-presaging riff into Nirvana's *Come As You Are*.

### We Care A Lot FAITH NO MORE 1985

When Chuck Mosley pseudo-rapped that his generation did indeed care about 'disasters, fires, floods and killer bees' and the 'NASA shuttle falling in the sea' over the punchiest slap-bass riff we'd ever heard – cannily punctuated by 'Big' Jim Martin's razor-wire guitar – it was the first indication that funk and metal could cheerfully co-exist.

### Angel Of Death SLAYER 1986

Slayer scared the mainstream to death with *Reign In Blood*, and the album's opening track is terrifying. Marrying contentious lyricism (the tale of Nazi doctor Josef Mengele) to the most deafening soundtrack, the LA thrashers redefined what being a metal band meant. It was faster, meaner and more brutal than anything that had gone before.

### I Am The Law ANTHRAX 1987

Anthrax weren't the first metal band to immortalise a comic-book hero in their lyrics, but this almost funky homage to *Judge Dredd* was a magnificent evolution from their more straight-ahead thrash origins.

### Baptized In Blood DEATH 1987

'The first word in death metal,' ran the band's



Ronnie Dio: making a formidable statement with *Holy Diver*.

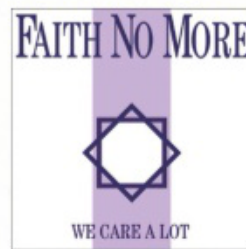
tagline. And it was true. Revolving around the fevered muse of the late Chuck Schuldiner, this exemplary track brought in a native, stultifyingly humid atmosphere that spliced throbbing bottom end to thrash's speed, bringing about new realms of lascivious horror.

### Eyes Of A Stranger QUEENSRYËCHE 1988

Queensrÿche's concept album *Operation: Mindcrime* is the record that has been the benchmark for prog metal ever since. *Stranger* combined intelligent lyrics and complex music – including a brilliant twin-guitar line – yet still provided the opportunity for a damn good headbang.

### Eagle Fly Free HELLOWEEN 1988

Its lyrics a mix of insightful prediction ('*Nowadays the air's polluted, that's what mankind contributed*') and the ludicrous ('*In the sky a mighty eagle doesn't care 'bout what's illegal*'), Helloween fine-tuned a pre-existing template to make it better still. Sung in impossibly high-pitched tones by Michael Kiske, *Eagle Fly Free* addressed issues of self-empowerment, individuality and authority's foolishness before signing off with an uplifting farewell of '*Together we'll fly someday*'. Brilliant.



Judas Priest: at the forefront when the future of metal was changing in the mid-70s.

### Head Like A Hole NINE INCH NAILS 1989

From Nine Inch Nails' debut album *Pretty Hate Machine*, *Head Like A Hole*'s driving yet nasty rhythm put Trent Reznor's breathtaking ethos of combining electro and industrial sounds within a slamming metal song into perspective. It introduced a new audience to industrial music, and inspired the likes of Marilyn Manson.

### Man In The Box ALICE IN CHAINS 1990

One of the iconic bands who helped to shape the 1990s, Alice In Chains had a unique sound – melancholy yet also uplifting. This first single from their debut saw the Seattle masters at their prime. It was clever, slightly perverse and all-enveloping, its detuned Sabbath-esque sludge tempered by a stunning melody, while Cantrell and Staley's call-and-response vocal lines on the chorus would set a template they'd utilise throughout their career.

### Jesus Built My Hotrod MINISTRY 1991

The band that began as virtually a disco outfit have come to be lauded as one of the most important industrial-metal names of them all. *Jesus Built My Hotrod* encapsulates everything that made Ministry so special – the driving, forceful refrain, the heady samples, the slanted vocals from Al Jourgensen – all wrapped up in high-speed humour. This is dance music for those who love Killing Joke and Suicide.

### Enter Sandman METALLICA 1991

The Black Album began the transformation of Metallica from being a big fish in a sizeable pond to being one of the biggest bands on the planet, helped hugely by this monster. With its lengthy, thumping, guitar-stabbing intro bringing it to the boil, melodic but dark verses and sudden-stop chorus, *Sandman* single-handedly expanded their audience ➤







**Pantera:** grabbed the classic metal approach of Sabbath and Metallica, shook it up and gave it a renewed sense of purpose.

to take in millions who thought they didn't like metal, and kept them on board.

## **Thumb** **KYUSS** 1992

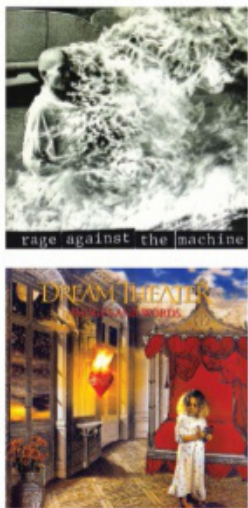
While there was a stoner sound before Kyuss – and others such as Queens Of The Stone Age would subsequently take this further – there's little doubt that this was the band that defined what 'stoner metal' was all about. And they were never better than on *Thumb*. It's the embodiment of stoner rock – a heavyweight blues base topped with a real psychedelic distortion.

## **Killing In The Name** **RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE** 1992

Although the seeds were sown in the previous decade by Aerosmith and Run-DMC, the concept of rap-metal came into its own later in the 90s. But never was it so virulently and powerfully pursued as here. Rage Against The Machine were a band who were prepared to expose the ills and hypocrisy of the era, while matching this with some of the most intense music of the decade – and *Killing In The Name* illustrates it perfectly. They gave metal back its voice of conscience, and budding guitarists a new hero in Tom Morello.

## **Pull Me Under** **DREAM THEATER** 1992

The whole idea of progressive rock was in the doldrums by the time Dream Theater came on the scene, yet the New York quintet actually succeeded in giving the genre some much-needed credibility. *Pull Me Under* proved it was possible for music to be complex and progressive musically while having a powerful melody at its heart. This was prog-metal for the masses.



**Kyuss:** the band who defined 'stoner metal'.



## **Walk** **PANTERA** 1992

At a time when something fresh was needed to boost the heaviest end of the musical spectrum, along comes metal's brightest new guitar star: Dimebag Darrell, a man who virtually reinvented the riff with this strutting, heavy-as-lead groove. The band managed to grab the classic metal approach of Sabbath and Metallica, shake it up and give it a renewed sense of purpose in the grunge-dominated jungle.

## **Ride** **CATHEDRAL** 1993

With the band having evolved from the harrowingly bleak plod of their early releases, Cathedral's second album saw them move into psychedelic, drug-induced realms whose groove-laden bounce and mad-sage blurting of surreal lyrics proved seminal for both doom and stoner rock. *Ride* has proved to be one of the most memorable tracks they've recorded, with a *Doctor Who* theme-style riff to ring throughout the ages.

## **Davidian** **MACHINE HEAD** 1994

At the time Machine Head released their debut album, thrash was lost in its own myth. But this track, more than any other, gave the genre a fresh taste for blood. While part of the metal world turned to the sounds of nu metal, *Davidian* proved that sticking to the traditional values gave a pointer to an energetic future. It was the most important thrash hymn for many years.

## **Forty Six & 2** **TOOL** 1996

With its 7/8 time signature, ghostly processed bass line and a verse vocal that whispered in your ear like a twisted lullaby, the Californian prog-metallers' 1996 single was deeply unsettling – even before frontman Maynard James Keenan explained that the title was about the "horrible mutation" that would result from an irregular number of chromosomes.

## **The Beautiful People** **MARILYN MANSON** 1996

While Manson had already made a mark as a protégé of Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor and someone who colourfully courted controversy, if he was to be anything other than just a passing nightmare then he needed a song to showcase both his musical and artistic ideologies. This was it. *The Beautiful People* launched his legend, and still defines his philosophy better than anything else.

## **Du Hast** **RAMMSTEIN** 1997

Perhaps it was inevitable that a German band would take the industrial groove, shake it about and give it a major overhaul. Rammstein did just that with their second album, *Sehnsucht*, and *Du Hast* typified their approach. It's a gloriously ludicrous militaristic march, blessed with a firm beat and also a quirky sense of humour. A stage show packed full of drama and pyrotechnics would ensure that the band and their sound would appeal to the masses and not to just a cult metal following.

## **Freak On A Leash** **KORN** 1998

Conceived by frontman Jonathan Davis as a pop at his paymasters ("It was about how I was being pimped off by the record industry"), this early single found nu-metallers Korn brimming with musical confidence, and sufficiently adept to segue from the intro's spidery guitar lines into a guttural rap section punctuated by what sounded like the honk of a clown car.

## **Wait And Bleed** **SLIPKNOT** 1999

The disintegration of society at the end of the last century was brought to a crescendo by a nine-man masked demolition machine from Iowa. Nihilism and dystopia were their pillars. *Wait And Bleed* became their rally call. It also proved to the world that there was



talent beyond the boiler suits, propelling Slipknot and metal into a new decade.

### One Step Closer LINKIN PARK 2000

Against all the odds, Linkin Park made the concept of pop-metal contemporary and fashionable again. Why? Because they knew how to write a clever tune which was hummable while also carrying an edge. In fact it's this very track that propelled Linkin Park to stadium-eating megaband status, and proved the timeless quality of great songs – whatever the passing fad might be.

### Only For The Weak IN FLAMES 2000

These days it's easy to take the Swedish metal sound for granted. But here is really where it got a focus. *Only For The Weak* is the best example of In Flames' pioneering approach: duelling guitars in a power-metal setting, with death-metal overtures and just a touch of gothic darkness, all assembled under the watchful gaze of an intense melody.

### The Drapery Falls OPETH 2001

When Opeth decided to work with Steven Wilson as their producer for the *Blackwater Park* album, who could have predicted that they'd reinvent the progressive metal genre? But that's precisely what they did with *The Drapery Falls*. The mix of brutal metal and more esoteric rhythms didn't seem so much like a marriage of styles, more like the birth of a new musical life force.

### Chop Suey SYSTEM OF A DOWN 2001

Everyone now assumes the System style has been with us for eons. Yet it was only in 2001, with the *Toxicity* album, that the Armenian-Americans got into their stride. What they created was an angular attack on nu metal, with overt political lyrical edginess. It was both confrontational, yet also considered. What's more, their vocal harmonies gave the band an extra dimension.

### Wish I Had An Angel NIGHTWISH 2004

This is the best example of the way that Nightwish combined their goth-metal music with the soaring operatic vocals of Tarja Turunen, all encapsulated in what is essentially a finely tuned pop song. There's a charismatic sensibility here, overcoming any uneasiness in the increasingly fractured relationship between singer and band.

### The Czar MASTODON 2009

The band who've been hailed by many as the new metal messiahs, Mastodon reached a crescendo on this epic from the breathtaking *Crack The Sky*. This is how you develop a 10-minute piece. It has all the ingredients which have helped to establish Mastodon's pre-eminence. It leaves you elated, breathless, yet feeling like it could have been even longer.



Slipknot: *Wait And Bleed* proved that there was talent beyond the boiler suits.

### Gimme Chocolate! BABYMETAL 2014

The perfect encapsulation of this Japanese schoolgirl trio's so-called 'kawaii metal' (literally translated as 'cute metal'), pummelling four-minute thrasher *Gimme Chocolate* came with a chorus so sweet it stripped the enamel from your teeth, not to mention a video that has chalked up a whopping 106 million views to date. Five years later, it still sounds like Hello Kitty going on a killing spree.

### Cirice GHOST 2015

Frontman Papa Emeritus's daughter chose this doomy rocker as the lead single from the *Meliora* album, demonstrating excellent (if macabre) taste for an eight-year-old. The song scored a Grammy for Best Metal Performance, but check out the video – styled as a retro-horror and set at a primary school talent show – for the priceless moment when a pint-sized Papa and his Nameless Ghouls hijack the stage.



Orange Goblin: *The Wolf Bites Back* is their finest hour to date.

### Stranded GOJIRA 2016

Drummer Mario Duplantier deemed *Stranded* an "easier" song than the Frenchmen's trademark highly complex brand of death metal, but that didn't make it any less potent. Built on an industrial-crunking riff with a pitch-shifted squeal, *Stranded* wasn't quite right in the head – an impression underlined by a video in which the band perform while surrounded by fitting mental patients and dog-masked nurses.

### Silfur-Refur SÖLSTAFIR 2017

The fact that it's shrieked in the post-metallers' Icelandic tongue only makes *Silfur-Refur* seem more unknowable and unsettling. "The song revolves around having a sick ghost version of yourself taking control of your life," explains frontman Aðalbjörn 'Addi' Tryggvason. "You resist with all you have, but you simply don't stand a chance. It travels with you all the time, asleep or awake."

### The Sin And The Sentence TRIVIUM 2017

Matt Heafy's brutal guitar anthemics marked this out as the highlight from Trivium's eighth album, but the seed was planted by a song title dreamed up by bassist Paolo Gregoletto on a plane ride: "I was really interested in the culture online of people piling on people, but using the metaphor of the witch hunts. That phrase – The Sentence And The Sin – fit perfectly."

### Sons Of Salem ORANGE GOBLIN 2018

Leading out last year's *The Wolf Bites Back* album, the Goblin's finest hour to date was a vintage hard-rock swagger whose 'rise up!' refrain had a flesh-creeping inspiration. "The lyrics are about the sons of the Salem witches returning from the grave," says frontman Ben Ward, "to seek vengeance on the religious fools that murdered their mothers during the witch trials."





# DEATH 0:01 ELVIS

Probably the most useless debate in the world: Is Elvis alive?

No question. He'll still live on long after everyone who now claims he is alive has died.

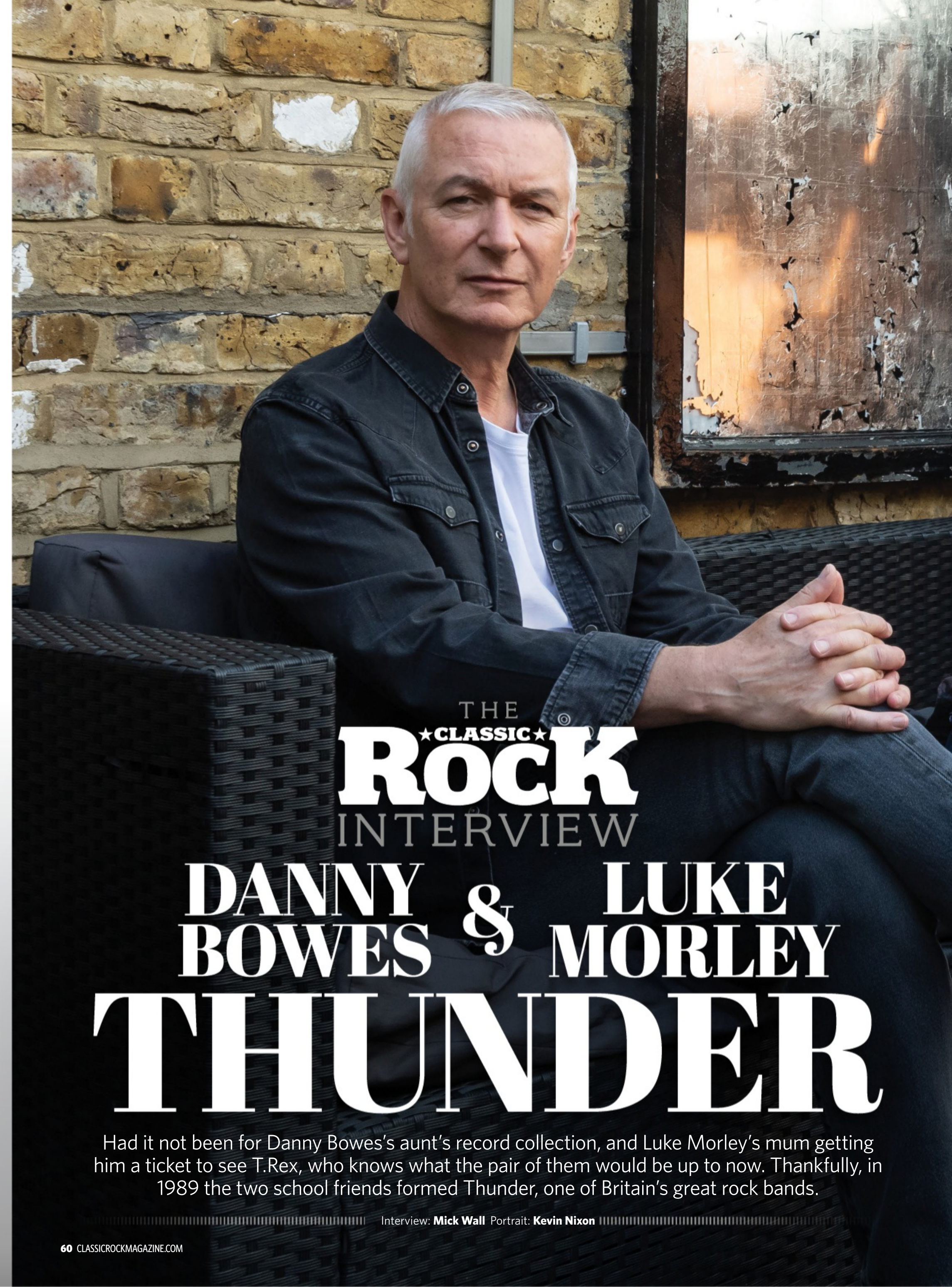
It is his music that made him immortal - along with Janis, Jimi, Wolfgang Amadeus, Freddie and all the others. Many of them lost the battle against drugs, alcohol and their inner demons far too soon. But they all had vanquished death long before.

THE POWER  
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INTERVIEW

**DANNY & LUKE  
BOWES MORLEY  
THUNDER**

Had it not been for Danny Bowes's aunt's record collection, and Luke Morley's mum getting him a ticket to see T.Rex, who knows what the pair of them would be up to now. Thankfully, in 1989 the two school friends formed Thunder, one of Britain's great rock bands.

Interview: **Mick Wall** Portrait: **Kevin Nixon**





**T**he story of Thunder is really the story of singer Danny Bowes and guitarist Luke Morley. Not just musically, but also in terms of personality, determination, even destiny. They are blood brothers who have known each other since they were 11 years old. You can't really understand the story of Thunder unless you know the story of their friendship.

We meet on a sunny afternoon at a hotel in London where the roof-level bar area comes equipped with hot tub, rock soundtrack and posters of Jimi Hendrix. Danny and Luke, as bona fide rock stars, both belong here yet look somehow strangely out of place. They don't buy all this rock-cool stuff. They never have. It's one of the many reasons Thunder fans still love them so much.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the release of their scene-setting debut album, *Back Street Symphony*. To mark the occasion in September they release *Thunder: The Greatest Hits*, and in October Danny and Luke undertake a 16-date UK tour titled *Unplugged & Unscripted*, in which they will perform acoustic versions of some of their best-known songs and be interviewed on stage by this writer. There are some full-on Thunder shows scheduled too, and a new album planned for 2020.

**What are your first memories of knowing each other?**

**Danny Bowes:** We were sitting opposite each other in the vestibule of our school, both there for our interviews, because it was a Direct Grant school. It was a bit *Tom Brown's School Days*.

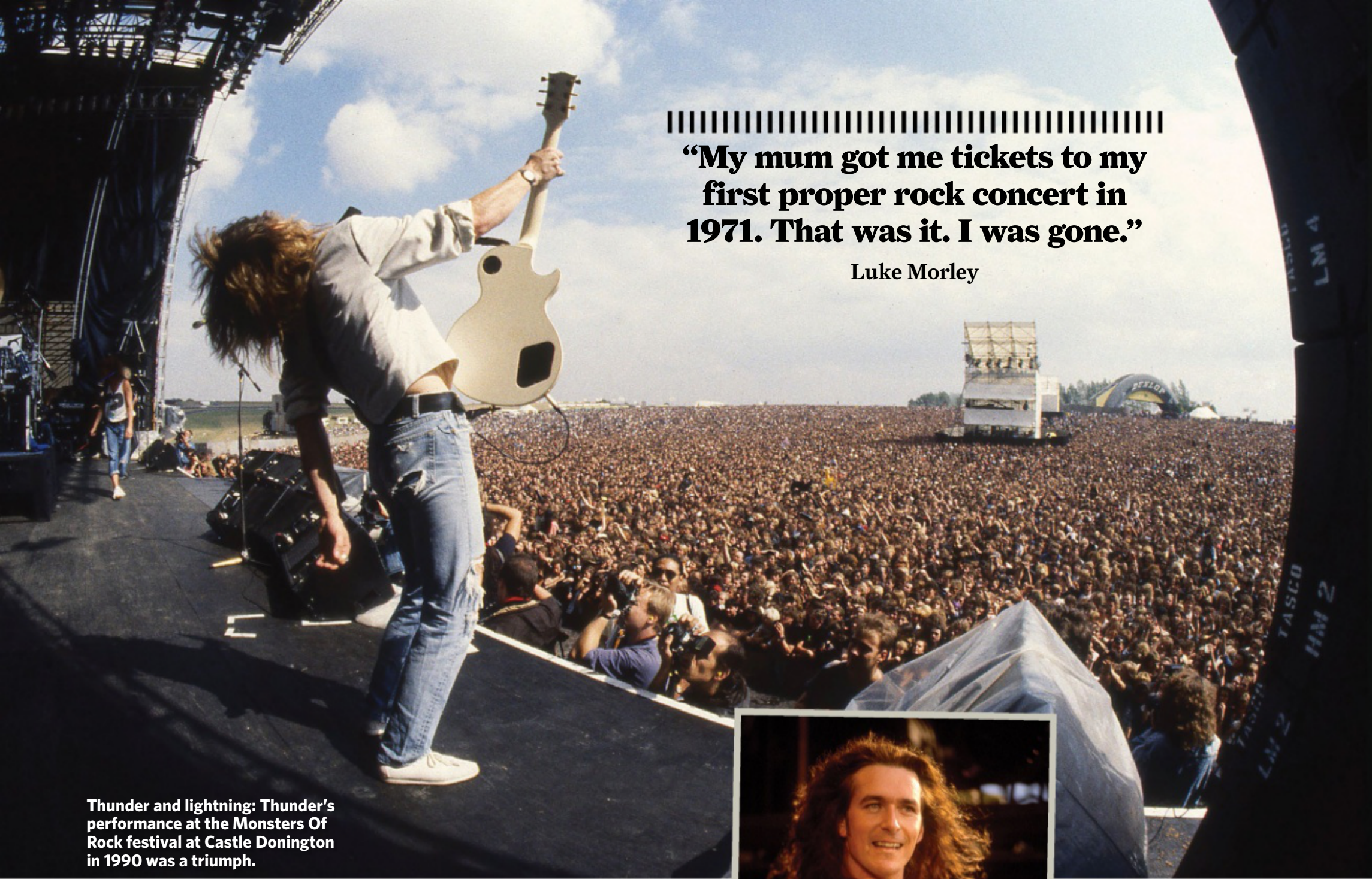
**Luke Morley:** One above a grammar school, but not quite a public school. So there were no boarders but there was a board of governors and all that stuff. So you had to be 'selected'.

**DB:** Or rejected, depending on the answers you gave at the interview. He was there with his mum and I was there with my mum. I'd been pretty much forced at gunpoint to have all my hair chopped off. I used to have really long hair. When I was eight years old, I was shaved bald by a blind pensioner, who used to do cheap haircuts from an air raid shelter down the bottom of his garden on the council estate where I lived. And it scarred me. After that every time they tried to make me have a haircut I ran out. But my mother got it into my head that if I didn't get a 'proper' haircut for this interview I'd never get in. Then we get there and who's sitting there – this one. And he's got very long bright-red hair! My mother looked at me and said under her breath: "He won't get in." I said, well, if he does I'll never talk to you again. So my mission on day one once I'd been accepted to the school was to find the kid with the red hair. And he was there! When I got home that night my mother said to me, "How was your first day?" I said, "He got in."

**At what point did you connect with each other musically?**

**LM:** My parents separated when I was ten and I went with my father, and his then girlfriend had a guitar – a Spanish acoustic. I'd always loved music as a kid and listened to a lot of Beatles, Stones, Bob Dylan, The Kinks... I loved The Beatles, particularly. So I saw this guitar and my father's girlfriend showed me a couple of chords. I was playing it right-handed. I'm left-handed but I didn't know which way you were supposed to hold the ➤





**Thunder and lightning: Thunder's performance at the Monsters Of Rock festival at Castle Donington in 1990 was a triumph.**

|||||  
**“My mum got me tickets to my first proper rock concert in 1971. That was it. I was gone.”**

Luke Morley



guitar. Then not long after that I discovered in my old man's record collection the first Hendrix album, which blew my brain completely. Then shortly after that he died. And I remember all the film of him on the news playing [guitar] with his teeth. That was it. “Dad I want a guitar! Dad I want a guitar! Dad I want a guitar!” So eventually he bought me a guitar. He said: “It’ll be just like your Action Man and you’ll throw it out the window and that will be it.” But I didn’t put it down for the next three years. I even slept with it. A very cheap and nasty Spanish acoustic with nylon strings. I lost interest in everything else. Then my mum got me tickets to go and see my first proper rock concert, T.Rex at Lewisham Odeon in 1971. That was it. I was gone.

**At what point, Danny, did you realise you could sing?**

**DB:** I grew up in a household where I don’t think we got a radio until I was about twelve. My father had been a singer in a band with his brothers – they both played guitar. They were called The Soundtrackers. I think they supported The Tremeloes once at Woolwich Odeon. They thought they were on the verge of the big time but my old man wasn’t interested. By then he had a young family and he just thought there was no money in it. So we didn’t even have a record player. No music in the house at all.

Then my youngest brother became very unwell and almost died and ended up in hospital for three months. And I was packed off

to my aunt, who was the rebel in the family. She had a couple of kids but she had a great big record collection; no covers, scratched to death, piled up in the corner. And to be honest it changed my life.

I discovered music – Sam Cooke, all the Tamla stuff, but also weird and wonderful stuff like Jethro Tull. I played them all, over and over. I found myself completely transfixed by the whole thing and needed to be involved in it. She told me she was getting a stereogram, so I begged her to give me the little mono record player.

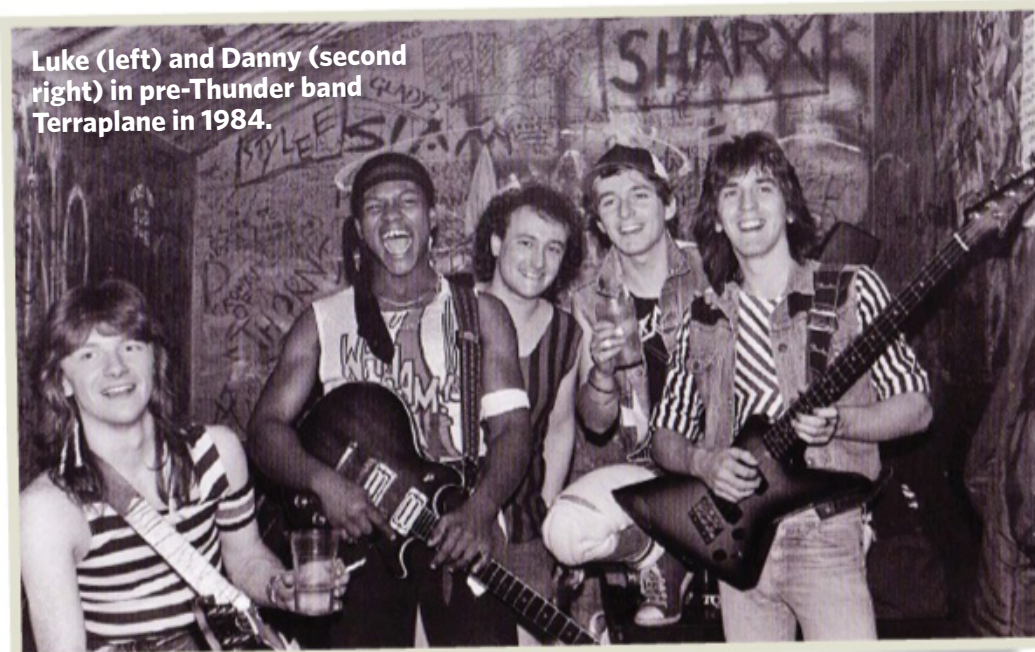
By then – this is 1973 – I was aware that there was this sort of record club at school, and that Luke had a copy of *Aladdin Sane* by David Bowie

– blew my mind all over again. Lyrics, cover, the big lightning bolt, I digested the whole thing. Played it over and over and over again. I even had it wired up to the light switch in my room. Flick the light switch on, the record player started. So that started me off, singing along with all these records.

When I told Luke I was a singer he said, “No, you’re not. Fuck off.” But my uncle

showed me this rotten old crystal microphone, which sounded much better if you sang with a cloth over it, and out of sheer desperation to get in Luke’s band I told him I had a microphone.

**LM:** My ears pricked up. Oh yeah? Must be serious, then [laughs].



**Luke (left) and Danny (second right) in pre-Thunder band Terraplane in 1984.**

**Your first gigging band together was Nuthin’ Fancy. You had one independently released single, *Lookin’ For A Goodtime*, which sounds very much an early ancestor of Thunder.**

**LM:** We were a covers band. We used to do a lot of Free songs. Bad Company.

**DB:** I had the beginnings of my voice. But I wasn’t massively blessed with confidence early on. I remember playing at The Bull in Hornchurch, a biker’s pub. Luke said to me: “If we’re going to get on, you’ve got to look at the audience.” I became much more





It's a family affair: Danny Bowes's dad and uncles in The Soundtrackers in the 60s.

aware of stagecraft, shall we say. I'd try something, and when it came off my confidence rocketed.

**Nuthin' Fancy were on the same pub circuit as a handful of other groups. How did you all coalesce into what became Terraplane?**

**LM:** There was a local pub in Greenwich called the White Swan where we played with a few other bands. That was where we met Ben Matthews, who ended up in Thunder, and Nick Linder, who became Terraplane's bass player. And Harry who was in a group called Moontier. All the bands went in to a talent contest at the Woolwich Tramshed. We didn't win but a very important thing happened. This very tall, slightly sinister-looking bloke wearing a cape came up to me.

**DB:** Imagine Christopher Lee as Dracula and you're not far off him.

**LM:** He said: "My name's Robert Wace and I used to manage The Kinks" and blah, blah, blah... "Would you say you were heavy metal?" I said: "I dunno." He said: "Well, I think you and the singer have something. Can I talk to you?" And he took us into the toilets.

**DB:** His parting words were: "Here's my card. If you're interested, give me a call." Then he turned into a bat and flew out the window. I don't think he was gay, I just think he was very of the sixties and also very posh and theatrical. He had an apartment in South Ken. He had dry-cleaning delivered. He gave us a glass of wine. I necked it and he said: "Are you an alcoholic?" I said: "No, no, no. Can I have another one?" We were so scared we took all our mates with us.

**LM:** He was our first encounter with anybody that had ever had any real success in the music business. It made me think: "Right, we have to take this seriously." Specifically what someone had said to me in the pub. He said: "I think you're mad. You've got three really average bands playing here. Why don't you combine the best of you and form one really great band?" That's when the light bulb went on in my head. So we got Nick from the band Ben was in, and nicked Harry from my mate Tony's band. And that was the beginning of Terraplane around the end of eighty, beginning of eighty-one. Robert came up with the name Terraplane – after this old vintage car – and we couldn't think of anything better.

**T**erraplane was one of those mid-80s rock bands that their record company – Epic – tried to mould into something



Thunder in 1991: (clockwise from top left) Ben Matthews, Danny Bowes, Harry James, Mark 'Snake' Luckhurst, Luke Morley.

## "The defining thing about the trip was seeing the Sunset Strip. Nothing like that existed in Britain."

Luke Morley on his and Danny's fact-finding mission to the US

more *Smash Hits* than *Kerrang!* Stylists were brought in, hair-teased, make-up applied, keyboards and synth drums smeared over everything. A once extremely promising rock band lost along the way. There were two albums, *Black And White* (1985) and *Moving Target* (1987). Good songs ruined by 80s artifice. But also big tours, opening for Meat Loaf, an appearance at Reading Festival in 1982. Learning the ropes of the music business.

**How did the transition from Terraplane to Thunder take place?**

**DB:** If we were writing a book about it now, page one, golden rule number one would be, don't listen to what anybody says.

**LM:** When Terraplane split in eighty-eight, Danny and I went off

on a fact-finding mission to America. We borrowed a load of money and jumped on an airplane. Did a week in New York, a week in LA. With the cockiness of youth we rang up all these people and said: "Would you meet us?" And a lot of them did. People at labels, agents in New York. We got around the place. Then went to LA, same thing, met as many people as we could. But the defining thing about the trip was really seeing the Sunset Strip. All along that bit of Sunset, Gazzarri's, the Rainbow, the Roxy, and everybody walking round with long hair and not wearing much. Nothing like that existed in Britain at that point. And hearing that music. It was while we were on that trip that we heard Aerosmith's *Permanent Vacation* for the first time, thinking: "That is brilliant. How did they make it sound like that?" Check the credits: mixed by Mike Fraser. The same Mike Fraser who then mixed the first Thunder album. It was also the general fact that rock music was cool in







**Thunder: still rolling after all these years.**

America. It hadn't been cool in Britain in the eighties. So we came back energised. And it coincided with me writing *Dirty Love* and one or two other things that ended up on *Back Street Symphony*. That was the end of Terraplane and the beginning of Thunder.

**How did you end up with former Duran Duran guitarist Andy Taylor producing your first album?**

**LM:** Andy Taylor's favourite guitarist was Eddie Van Halen. Andy had just come out of the Power Station, had produced an album for Rod Stewart, *Out Of Order*, which was really rocking, and we heard he was interested in working with a young rock band.

**DB:** When we met him we got on straight away. One of the things he really did for us was what he called Attitude Adjustment. He basically said: "Don't turn it down. Turn it up."

**LM:** "Don't drink one wine when you can have five [laughs]." "Louder! Harder! Faster! More girls!" He'd kind of had his wings clipped in Duran, so he was like us, really up for it now.

**DB:** He kept saying: "You really like each other, don't you?" That freaked him out, because he'd never known that before. He said: "This is the band I always wanted to be in." That gave us a huge boost of confidence.

**LM:** The first time I ever sat in a room with him, he had this

proper rock-star pad. It was on top of an old mental institution in Wandsworth. It was this mental flat, too. A couple of the Thompson Twins in the flat next door – a real weird place, with castle turrets and a Jacuzzi. I took a guitar over there and we sat down, had a couple of beers and wrote *She's So Fine*. We were off to the races at that point.

**Thunder took off immediately after that album was released. When did you realise you were finally becoming successful?**

**LM:** That first year, as well as doing God-knows how many club dates on our own, we opened for

Aerosmith, Heart and a few other people as well. Until we stepped on stage at Donington, though, we had no idea what we'd become. You could see the album was selling nicely. But Donington was the moment that crystallised it – 80,000 people, we started the first song and all the hands went up. I was like, fucking hell! The hairs are going up the back of my neck even thinking about it now. All that previous year of graft, and the four years that had gone before with Terraplane, it all kind of led to that moment and it was fantastic. That gig changed our lives.

I've never been nervous on a stage since. Never.

**You also made that journey from LPs to CDs. Your first album was ten tracks. The second, *Laughing On Judgement Day*, in 1992, was fourteen tracks. In retrospect would you concede that affected the quality?**

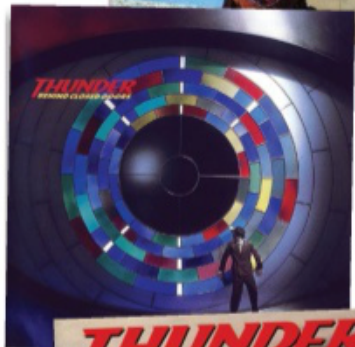
**DB:** Yeah, it was too long.

**LM:** Like a lot of bands at that time, we were pushed to embrace CDs. Hey, get an hour's worth of music. When maybe that's not necessarily the best idea. [Laughs]

**It reached No.2 in the UK. Three Top 20 singles, including the brilliant *Low Life In High Places*. Next stop America – that's what it looked like at the time. Especially after Axl Rose gave you his personal endorsement and you signed to Guns N' Roses's label, Geffen. What happened?**

**DB:** One word: grunge.

**LM:** I think Geffen saw us in that hair-metal thing. You know what Americans are like. Everything has to go in its own nice little niche. That's just how they marketed rock bands. So the first American video for *Dirty Love* was very much in that style. But that video was all over MTV, the album was released, and we were booked on to a tour with David Lee Roth and Cinderella. Then our American manager, Larry Mazar, rang up and said: "Don't bother coming. Tickets aren't selling."



**“Until we stepped on stage at Donington, we had no idea what we'd become.”**

**Luke Morley on playing Monsters Of Rock in 1990**





**“We still had an audience, and as long as we looked after them our audience would look after us.”**

Danny Bowes

The tour will close within a week.” We said: “Why?” He said: “Grunge.” We said: “What’s grunge?” He said: “Well, okay, there’s this band called Nirvana...” At that point, the tap got turned off at Geffen. There was no money for us to go to America and tour. That was it. The rug was pulled. To this day we have never toured America.

**DB:** We did a few clubs, and everywhere we played we had the whole audience in the dressing room afterwards saying: “Who the fuck are you? Where can I buy your records? I think you’re absolutely amazing!” Our record company hated us. Then things got like that here too. In the press, anyway.

**Your third album, *Behind Closed Doors*, in 1995, made No.5, had a couple of Top 30 singles. But the wheel had already turned, is that right?**

**DB:** Yes. You can’t control what happens to the rest of the world. You can make good records, you can put on good live shows but that’s all you can do. The rest is left to fate, really. We made the third album in America, to be close to Geffen, in the hope that we would be able to tour in America. But it didn’t make a blind bit of difference. Not a jot.

**It was around this time the story of David Coverdale wanting to nick Luke for his band started. This one’s never gonna go away. Did you, Luke, or didn’t you?**

**LM:** No, of course not!

**So it was just a publicity thing?**

**LM:** Yes.

**And what were you doing Danny while the story was doing the rounds?**

**DB:** Stoking it. Coverdale ended up getting asked about it as well. And he played the game too, didn’t he? [Laughs]

**In 1996 you left EMI and made *The Thrill Of It All* for Castle. But you were no longer the flavour of the month. Grunge had taken over. The gang of media supporters had shrunk.**

**DB:** The writing was on the wall when EMI said they wanted a ‘greatest hits’ in 1995. Next thing you know, we were off EMI – along with all the debt. That was good, but going to Castle after EMI was a completely different experience. That was a tough one to get to grips with. The press, when they

did write about us, it was all “good old Thunder, they do what they do”. Safe. Boring. I remember certain band members getting very upset. How can they turn on us like that? I said they’re not turning on us. We aren’t what they want to write about any more. But we still had an audience, and as long as we looked after them our audience would look after us. We ploughed on and it was still great when we toured, but difficult to get any records away anymore.

**The 1999 album *Giving The Game Away* was the first not to make the Top 40, leading to the band splitting up in 2000.**

**DB:** We’d been together for ten years at that point and the landscape was very, very difficult for a band like us.

**LM:** It was a bit hamster in the wheel. We would go out every eighteen months and do a tour, which would do well. But it felt like the doors were all closed when it came

to our records. So we thought, okay, let’s stop then.

**There was still a flurry of Thunder-related activity – a Luke Morley solo album, drummer Harry James joined Magnum. There was a Bowes & Morley album. Was it inevitable you would eventually come back together?**

**DB:** No. But two years later I’d been working with what is now Live Nation on a project to do with Monsters Of Rock shows but indoors. So we put a bill

**“You want stories? We’ve got ‘em!” Danny and Luke chat to *Classic Rock*, August 2019.**







**Luke and Danny look forward to their Unplugged & Unscripted tour.**  
**"Talking is not something we ever have a problem with," says Luke.**

## "The audience reaction was so mental and so loud, we thought David Coverdale had popped out!"

Danny Bowes on opening for Whitesnake and Journey in 2013

together but we still didn't have the special guests. Bear in mind that Thunder had nothing for two years. They then suggested that Thunder might be the special guests. So I went to the band, said here's an offer, it's arenas, what do you want to do? And they all said great, let's do it.

**That led to you forming your own label, STC, and releasing four more Thunder albums over the next five years. Then in 2008 you split again. Why?**

**DB:** Things were fine but the trouble is, it's a lot of work doing things like that. After eight years of me basically doing all the work on that, I was on the edge of a nervous breakdown. The band was disappointed, but to their credit they all understood.

**Danny, you then went to work for top music biz talent agent Neil Warnock. Luke, you formed The Union. Then out of the blue Thunder was back again.**

**LM:** The end of The Union coincided with me and him getting a large tax bill [laughs]. I phoned him and said: "Chap, I think we

should do some festivals next year." Then Andy Copping at Live Nation phoned and said: "I've got this bill coming over, Journey and Whitesnake. How do you feel about doing that as a warm-up act?" We said okay, fuck it, why not?

**DB:** After the first song the audience reaction was so mental and so loud, we were looking behind us. We thought David Coverdale had popped out from behind the curtains! And this went on night after night, people singing all the words, wearing all the T-shirts.

**LM:** We didn't realise people still had that love for us. We'd forgotten. So we thought: there will probably never be a better time to make another record. And we made *Wonder Days*, one of our best albums.

**DB:** So here we are – and back on a label, BMG. We had to go back on a major label otherwise I'd have been jumping back in the fire. I can concentrate on the management – and singing in the band!

**Now the two of you are doing this speaking tour in October, Unplugged & Unscripted.**

**LM:** I think it'll be great. Talking is not something we ever have a problem with.

**It will be like getting Rod Stewart and Ronnie Wood on a stage, chatting and playing. Page and Plant. Bowie and Ronson.**

**LM:** It should be good. We're really looking forward to it. The nice thing is that a lot of the songs work really well with just an acoustic guitar.

**DB:** And a vocal. [Laughs]

**How do you cope on the road these days, compared to your wild and crazy days?**

**LM:** Well, neither myself nor Danny nor Harry has ever done a Class-A drug. The booze definitely, and the birds. I'm married now so not anymore. But back in the day, fucking hell! That was the great thing about Thunder becoming successful. I was like, okay, I'm going to enjoy this for a while. These days, one's stamina isn't quite what it was, put it like that. Back in the day, when we were doing those long theatre tours, we'd have three pints and a couple of whiskies before we went on stage, then drink while we were onstage, then afterwards start drinking properly. Now the first beer doesn't touch my lips until we come off stage.

**DB:** With the march of time comes the realisation that if you continue to do things the way you did when you were young, you won't be able to do them much longer. Also, I've got to the stage where I've started to find it just really dull, drinking. I got to the stage where I thought I'm even boring myself. You do enjoy it more if you do it less often.

**Are we still talking about drinking?**

**LM:** I'm not sure. Are we? [Laughs]

*Thunder: The Greatest Hits is out on September 27 via BMG.*





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# SONGS FOR MY FATHER

As Danish rockers **Volbeat** release their seventh album, frontman Michael Poulsen can look back on a life of hard graft and triumph over adversity. He owes much of it to his late father, and the vintage rock'n'roll he inherited from him.

Words: **Dave Everley** Portrait: **Ross Halfin**

**M**ichael Poulsen was in his hotel room when the phone rang and he was told his partner had gone into labour. The snag was that Poulsen was in New York and she was back home in Denmark. His initial reaction was: "What the fuck? This wasn't supposed to be happening for another two months."

Poulsen was in the US with his band Volbeat, as the main support on Metallica's World Wired Live tour. It was a big deal for them, but not such a big deal that the singer couldn't cancel that evening's show in order to get the next available flight home.

"I flew back, saw my girlfriend and my little daughter for one day," he says. "Then I flew straight back to America."

As soon as he touched down, Poulsen was bundled into a waiting van and driven to the venue where Volbeat were playing that night, arriving 15 minutes before they were due to go on stage.

"Honestly, I don't remember that show at all," says the singer, who wrote a song about his daughter, titled 7.24 after the time of her birth, for his band's new album, *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*. "I was jet-lagged, I was emotional, I was so up in the air because of the whole situation at home. That whole period was fucking crazy."

'Fucking crazy' has been Volbeat's default setting for much of the past 10 years. Not because of any rock'n'roll behaviour – Poulsen largely abstains from alcohol these days – more because the Danish four-piece have stealthily muscled their way to the front of the modern metal pack.

This is partly down to the patronage of Metallica. James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich have taken Poulsen and his bandmates under their collective wing, publicly expressing their admiration for them and putting their money where their mouth is by offering them several opening slots down the years. But it's mostly down to Volbeat themselves. The group's gasoline-fuelled noise fuses modern metal and

vintage rock'n'roll, with Poulsen playing James Hetfield and Elvis Presley at the same time.

That ambition is evident on *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*, a rocket ride of a record that wears its commercial intent proudly on its sleeve.

"You can call it 'commercial', you can call it 'mainstream'," says Poulsen, a man who has put his time in in the extreme metal underground. "I know the feeling of a song that makes me happy. If something is successful, it means I'm doing my job properly."

**M**ichael Poulsen is a rock'n'roll evangelist. That's rock'n'roll in its original, pure form: brandishing a big guitar and sporting a slicked-up quiff and a switchblade attitude. Even as a death metal kid in his original

*Rebound*, prompted in part by Poulsen's experience of becoming a father. It's there in the references to childhood in the artwork – three kids done up like characters from *Peaky Blinders* on the front, the same three kids playing in the woods, surrounded by an hourglass, on the inside sleeve. It's certainly there in the lyrics of the self-explanatory *When We Were Kids*, a celebration of the joy of childhood tinged with a melancholy for times no one can get back.

"When you're a child, you're free," says Poulsen. "Everything is so innocent, you think you can live forever, but everything is really so fragile. You grow up, go your separate ways. You should definitely remember to allow yourself to be a kid again, because that's when we fly."

Poulsen is one half of the youngest of two sets of twins, and the only boy among them. His father, Jørn, had a tough upbringing, running away from home at the age of 14, and living on the street until someone took pity on him and gave him a job in a bakery. "I learned early on that I didn't have anything to complain about," he says.

His father died in 2008, but even today he remains the biggest influence on his son's life. He's the subject of more than one Volbeat song, including the emotionally charged 2010 single *Fallen*. Michael has the name of his father and his mother tattooed

on his knuckles.

"He never forced me to take any kind of education or anything," says Poulsen. "He said: 'If you don't want to go to school, fuck school, but you still need to work at what you do. If you're doing music, you have to do it a hundred per cent. You have to get up at least four hours before all the other lazy bums in the rock scene to get ahead of them.'"

One of Poulsen's other big heroes is Johnny Cash. As with so many things, he was introduced to the late country icon's music by his dad. A few years ago, Poulsen read Cash's autobiography. One passage in it resonated deeply with him.

"He was so intoxicated by drugs and alcohol, ➤

**"I grew up in a house with parents who constantly played fifties music. It was as normal having milk in the refrigerator. It's part of my DNA."**

**Michael Poulsen**

band, Dominus, the likes of Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis were his North Star.

"I like the sound of old rock'n'roll," he says. "I like the simplicity of it. I like the art of making a very simple song good. For me, a song becomes alive when you learn to communicate with an instrument, where your soul and your heart starts working with it. There was a lot of that in the fifties, It came straight from the heart."

He inherited his love of vintage sounds from his parents: "I grew up in a house with parents that were constantly playing music from the fifties. It was as normal having milk in the refrigerator. It's part of my DNA."

There's a sense of looking back on *Rewind, Replay,*



**The men behind the 'Beat: (l-r)  
Jon Larsen, Rob Caggiano, Michael  
Poulsen, Kaspar Boye Larsen.**





he went into a forest, where he found a cave and laid down to die,” Poulsen explains. “He was sick and tired of living. But then he woke up and everything had changed. He felt like he’d been given a chance. He became a new man.”

That story inspired *Last Day Under The Sun*, the propulsive opening track on *Rewind, Replay, Rebound*. In it, Poulsen retells Cash’s story, but it could well be his own; his dad’s death plunged him into a deep depression.

“I went into a dark place when I lost my father,” he recalls. “I started abusing alcohol. I was really in a black hole. I couldn’t get out of it.”

Volbeat’s success distracted him from his own problems, but things were getting worse. He would drink a bottle of whisky on stage every night, then carry on partying afterwards. Photos from the time show him looking overweight and unhealthy.

“I couldn’t remember a single show we played, cos I was drunk all the time,” he says. “But it didn’t make anything easier.”

The tipping point came after a show in Las Vegas. The singer had become good friends with Danish light-heavyweight world champion Mikkel Kessler, and Kessler was at the gig. Afterwards, the boxer asked Poulsen if he had drunk a whole bottle of whisky on stage. “I went: ‘Yeah, it’s not a problem. It’s so hot up there that I burn it off.’”

Kessler was having none of it. He told Poulsen that he needed to cut back the drinking, lose at least 15 kilos, totally overhaul his life. His words cut through the whiskey fog, partly because Poulsen’s father had been a boxer in his youth and was a fan of Kessler.

“There was something in what he said that was really tempting,” says Poulsen. “I wanted to make my father proud, and I wanted to make Mikkel Kessler proud.”

Back in Denmark he began attending Kessler’s gym, where the boxer got him into shape. Poulsen quit drinking and started eating healthily. He lost a lot of weight. “Twenty-two kilos,” he says proudly. “I felt different in my body, I felt different in my mind set. I couldn’t have carried on like I did. Volbeat wouldn’t have existed any more.”

**T**hat was 10 years ago. Today, Poulsen keeps up his healthy living regime. “I run ten kilometers then do some exercises afterwards. That’s what I do every morning before I get my breakfast. Then I’m ready for the day.”

He says that these days he drinks once every few months at most. When people come up to him on tour and ask to come out and get mashed with them, he politely turns them down. “It’s not like I’m trying to give them any kind of lesson,” he says. “It’s more, like, you know what, I’ve been there.” He laughs. “There’s no way I can play a good show with a hangover.”

It’s not only about playing good shows. As well as being the singer, guitarist and chief songwriter with Volbeat, Poulsen is unofficial CEO of the whole organisation.

“Volbeat is also a business,” he says. “I’m the first one and the last one everybody calls when we have to make decisions. I’m as proud when the business is going good as I am when I make a good record, because I know I’ve been behind it every day. That’s



## AN AMERICAN IN DENMARK

Ex-Anthrax guitarist Rob Caggiano talks about life in Volbeat.

**R**ob Caggiano first met Michael Poulsen at a Big Four show in 2010. Caggiano was a member of Anthrax at the time, and Poulsen was someone who had grown up listening to thrash metal.

“It was the first time I heard the name Volbeat,” Caggiano (above, left) says today. “There was definitely a buzz about them. But I didn’t know what they sounded like until they toured with [Anthrax spin-off project] the Damned Things the following year.”

On that tour the guitarist regularly jammed with Volbeat on a cover of The Misfits’ *Angelfuck*, but Caggiano couldn’t have guessed that he would end up a full-time member of Volbeat. But that’s what happened in 2013, after Caggiano left Anthrax, looking for a fulfilling creative outlet.

“I flew out to help do the record [alongside

producer Jacob Hanson], and I just ended up staying,” he recalls.

Today, Caggiano is a key member of the band – an actual American in a band fascinated by American culture. But there’s no question who’s in charge.

“This is Michael’s band, no question. He’s the one who started it way back in the day, he’s the one with the bigger vision of what it’s all about. He’s very to-the-point about a lot of stuff. But he’s got a knack for making good choices.”

Caggiano has seen Volbeat grow in popularity over the time he’s been a member. “It’s getting bigger and bigger,” he says. “That feeds into what we do.” The only thing that’s taken a little getting used to is Denmark. “It’s a fantastic place, and the people are amazing, but there’s a different energy to what I’m used to,” he says. “Hey, I’m from New York, what can I say?”

a lot of responsibility. You can’t handle that if you’re in bed fucking drunk.”

The focus has paid off. Volbeat’s trajectory has risen consistently since Poulsen founded the band in 2000 from the ashes of his metal outfit Dominus (the latter’s penultimate album, released in 1997,

for ‘Little Elvis’, a nickname bestowed on him by James Hetfield. Inevitably, Poulsen is too respectful to admit that he ever thinks Metallica should get out of the way and let his own band have a shot at the title. “We’re just following in what they did,” he says. “I’d never compare them to us. But I know Volbeat have something unique. If it ended tomorrow, I’d be happy with what we’ve done.”

He should be. Willing yourself from self-destruction to sobriety, success and, beyond that, fatherhood is no small achievement. Somewhere, he says, his father is watching over him.

“I don’t believe in God or anything like that, but I like to believe that,” he says. “I’m pretty sure he’s sitting and laughing somewhere, saying: ‘My boy made it.’”

*Rewind, Replay, Rebound* is out now via Vertigo. Volbeat tour the UK and Ireland Sept 23-Oct 30.

**“I know Volbeat have something unique. If it ended tomorrow, I’d be happy with what we’ve done.”**

**Michael Poulsen**

was titled *Vol Beat*). They’re the most successful Danish band in history: *Rewind, Replay, Rebound* entered the UK Top 10, and their last three albums have all reached the US Top 30.

Having the world’s most successful metal band as your corner men doesn’t hurt. Poulsen has the phrase ‘Little E’ tattooed on his hand. It’s short



# ROCKIN' THE CITY OF ANGELS

**I**N THIS LAVISHLY ILLUSTRATED celebration of classic and progressive rock bands of the 1970s, author Doug Harr shares his vivid memories of the mind-altering rock spectacles he witnessed in his hometown of Los Angeles—the City of Angels—at the genesis of a new art form. Get a front-row seat at three-dozen spectacular concerts and the albums that spawned them. Revisit these legendary records and concerts along with reviews of the best video documents of the era, each band illuminated by a hand-picked collection of brilliant images—most never-before seen—by the era's best rock photographers. This 396-page hardcover book features over 600 images. Foreword by Armando Gallo.

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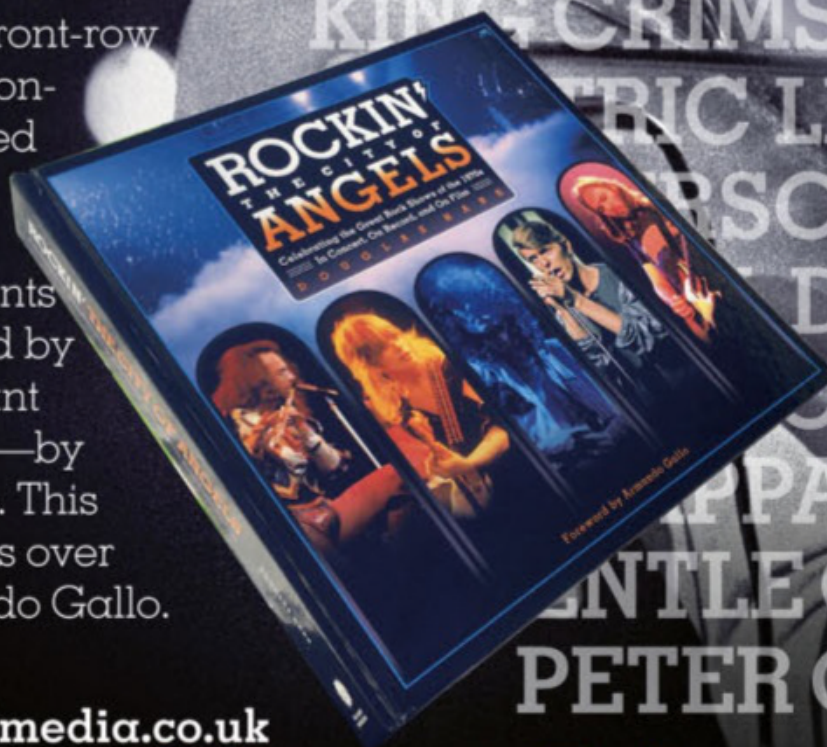
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# Sighs Matters

In the 70s guitarist **Robin Trower** made his classic album *Bridge Of Sighs* with Jim Dewar. Today he heads up his power trio and shows no sign of slowing down.

Words: **David Sinclair**

**C**oming closer to the day/Move on up through the gears or turn away... (Coming Closer To The Day, by Robin Trower).

It is a sombre fact that, with every passing month, the heroes of the classic rock era are being steadily gathered in. Robin Trower, still on the road and in rude health at the age of 74, regards old age and the looming final curtain as a frontier to be navigated with increasing determination. "My feeling is that as you're going towards the end of life, if I want to get to where I'm going, particularly in music, I've got to work harder," Trower says. "You have to start revving up."

His new album, the ominously titled *Coming Closer To The Day*, certainly finds Trower firing on all cylinders. His twenty-third studio album as a solo act, it is another showcase for his skills as one of the supreme electric guitarists of his, or indeed any, generation. A master of technique, tone and texture, Trower developed an early infatuation with Jimi Hendrix into a transcendent blues-rock style that is entirely his own. He continues to sculpt rugged riffs and celestial solos into a sonic art form. Is he still evolving as a guitarist?

"I'm trying to perfect something," he says. "I'm not quite sure what it is. But I'm working on it."

Trower's overarching reputation as a guitar hero has tended to obscure his track record as a songwriter and, in recent years, a singer in his own right. "I think I'm growing as a composer," he says. "By the time an album comes out I'm already halfway into the next one. I keep writing and recording because it's fun to do. I'm always at it. The main way it's changed is that I'm now writing for me to sing it."

**I**n some respects, this brings Trower full circle to the days when he began songwriting as a member of prog-rock legends Procol Harum. His first recorded composition was *Whisky Train*, the lead single from the fourth Procol album, *Home*, released in 1970. By the time of the band's next album, *Broken Barricades* [1971], Trower had written three of its songs, two of which – *Song For A Dreamer* and *Poor Mohammed* – also featured him on lead vocals. "I started to realise that I was coming up with a lot more ideas than Procol had room for," Trower says. "So I was driven to go forward into my own thing."

Quite apart from their epic hit *A Whiter Shade Of Pale* (recorded just before Trower joined), Procol Harum were a big-selling, globally established

album act with a significant profile in America. So when Trower, with no manager or record deal in place, decided to leave to pursue a solo career, it was a big roll of the dice.

"It was something I had to do," he says. "I was driven. Those were the days when you could have more confidence. It wasn't like today, where everybody and his brother's making an album and putting it out. There weren't many people who could cut it. It could have all gone awry. But I believed in my creativity. I believed in my talent."

His first move after leaving Procol was to put

The short-lived liaison with Miller nevertheless set Trower on the path to his destiny. He discovered that Dewar was not only a strong and supple bass player, but also a sublime singer with a raw, soulful vocal timbre that recalled the singing of Paul Rodgers, no less.

"I got together with Jim and started to talk about coming up with a band with him doing bass and vocals. Because by then I'd realised what a great singer he was. He wasn't a natural frontman. He was a quiet guy, not someone to push himself forward at all. The perfect foil for me, really."

Trower and Dewar brought in drummer Reg Isidore, a West Indian-born Londoner, and the band started rehearsing as a trio. Trower, who was living in his home town Southend-on-Sea, would pick up Dewar from his place in Leytonstone and then drive over to a little rehearsal room in South London, previously used by the Rolling Stones, where they would meet Isidore. They worked up a bunch of original songs, written for the most part by Trower and Dewar, although on one number, *Hannah*, Isidore was also included on a three-way writing credit in recognition of his contribution to the "psychedelic" section in the middle. "We worked that up out of a jam, basically, so we gave Reg a credit," Trower explains.

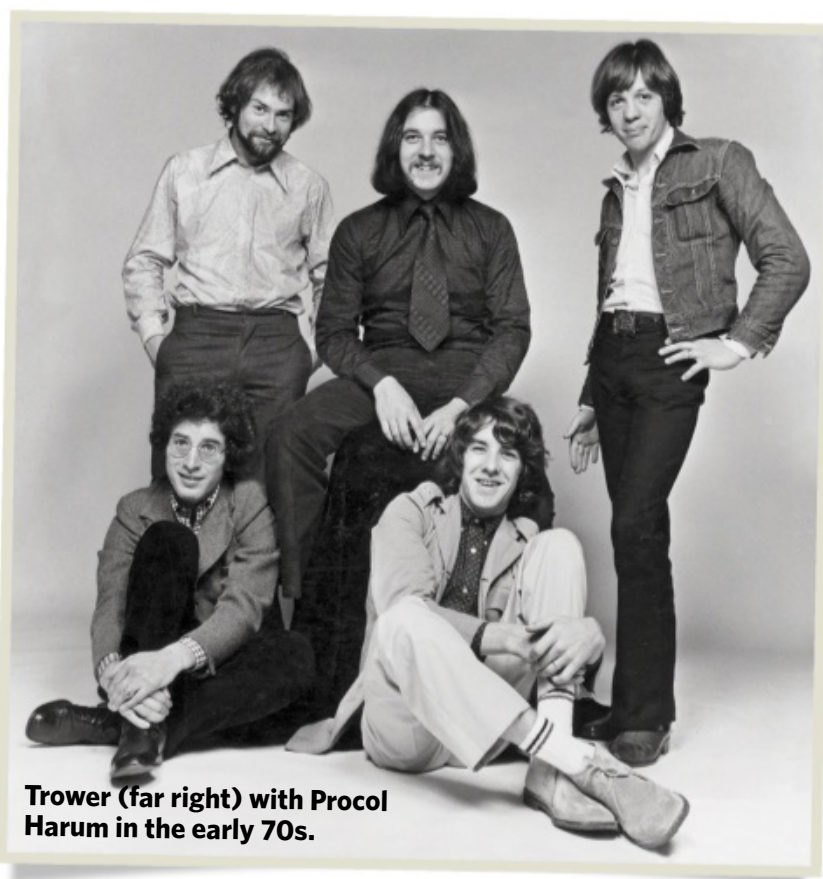
How did the songwriting partnership with Dewar work?

"Most of the things he gets credit for, he would have written the lyric, I would think. There were some where I wrote the lyric and he wrote some of it. The bass lines were all Jim's. Well not *Bridge Of Sighs*, that was mine. *Too Rolling Stoned* was mine. Maybe a couple of others."

One number of special significance, *I Can't Wait Much Longer*, was a legacy of the previous partnership with Frankie Miller.

A doomy, spacey, stoner-rock epic, written by Miller and Trower, it would become the first track on Trower's debut album, *Twice Removed From Yesterday*, a killer opening statement that introduced Trower as the new guitar hero on the block. "We wrote a load of songs for that band [Jude]," Trower says, nonchalantly. "But I didn't move any of them forward apart from *I Can't Wait Much Longer*."

Still with no label or management, Trower managed to secure financial backing from one Ronnie Lyons, described by Trower as "an American guy, who was originally Procol's tour manager, who was interested in helping me get going as a solo artist". Lyons funded a recording

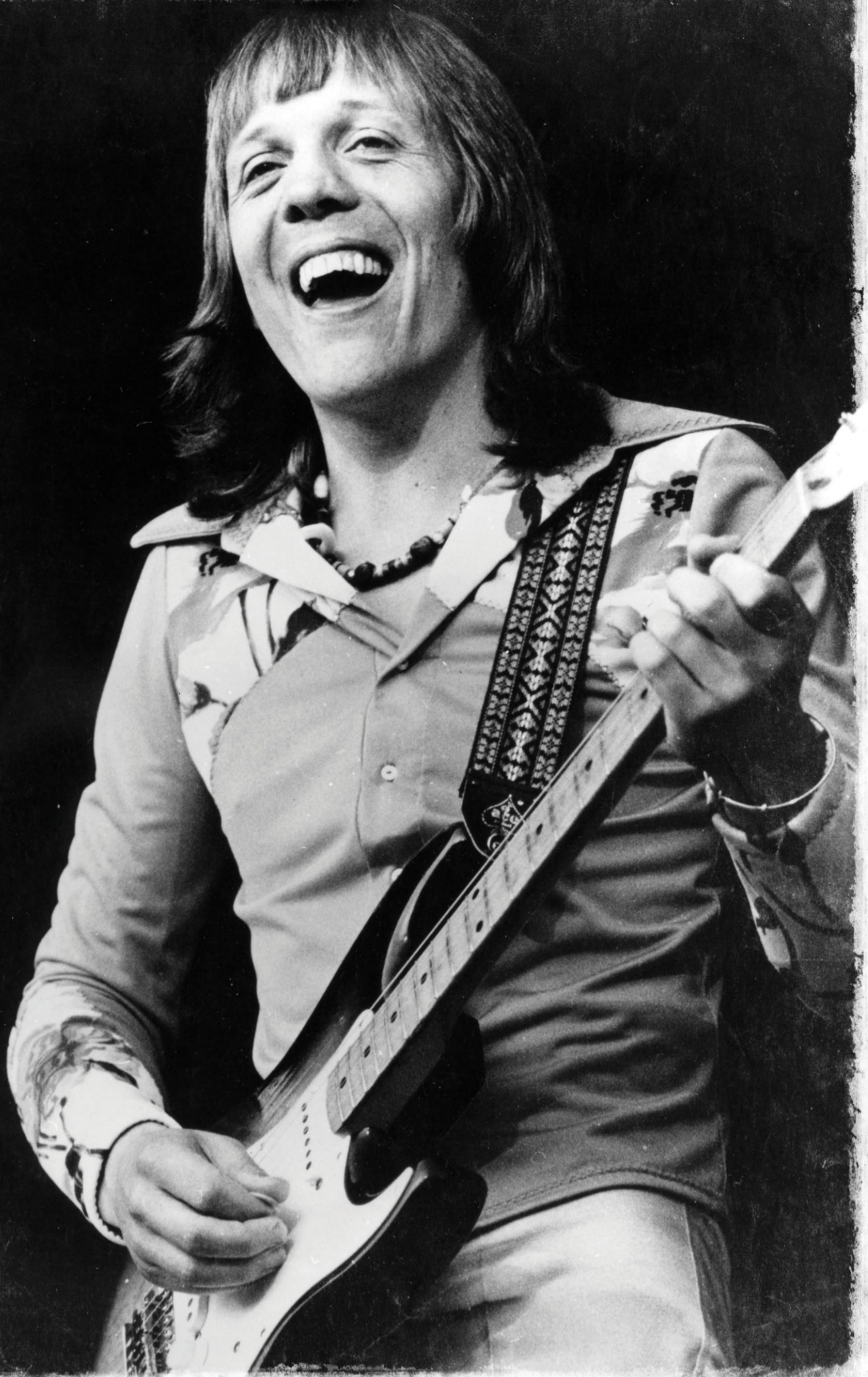


**"Jim's voice helped the music to cross over. His voice took it into the mainstream."**

together a band called Jude with Frankie Miller, a Scottish singer-songwriter who had recently moved to London, and ex-Jethro Tull drummer Clive Bunker. The bass player in Jude was an old friend of Miller's from Glasgow called James Dewar. Trower recalls his first impression of Dewar: "He was an absolute sweetheart. No doubt about it. A lovely guy. Soft-spoken. Soft nature. He was very bright and very well-read. And he had a good sense of humour."

On paper, Jude looked like a dream ticket. But the four-piece band didn't work out. "It was a good line-up," Trower says with a shrug. "It should have worked better than it did. You just never know."







# ROBIN TROWER



One of the great power trios: (l-r) Jim Dewar, Robin Trower and Reg Isidore.

session at Olympic Studios in London and, with Trower's former Procol bandmate Matthew Fisher producing, the trio recorded five songs which would become the basis of that first album.

Lyons began hawking the tracks around. "He couldn't get a deal with it," Trower recalls. "So I took it to Chrysalis [Procol Harum's label] myself. Doug D'Arcy [MD of Chrysalis] said that on the strength of my name with Procol, they could make money out of me going solo. That's all it was."

This perhaps explains why the band were referred to only as Robin Trower, and not by a band name. It was an unusual arrangement, given the origins of the group and Dewar's central contribution as the lead (and indeed only) vocalist and co-songwriter. A lot of people thought Trower must be the singer.

"Yes. That was very confusing," the guitarist admits. "It was a bit like Manfred Mann, I suppose, where the band was named after me."

Wouldn't it have been more equitable to call it the Robin Trower Band?

"To me, it was all about my music. I looked around and I saw people that had left famous bands and disappeared. My name was selling it. That seemed sensible to me."

*Twice Removed From Yesterday* was released on Chrysalis in March 1973. Although it made little initial headway in the UK, it quickly made an impression in America. "We did a club tour of America, pretty much straight away. But what really helped was Chrysalis let us go out and support their big acts out there: Jethro Tull, Ten Years After, King Crimson." As well as gaining exposure from playing second on the bill at these big arena shows, Trower benefitted from a sound that was perfect for the album-oriented rock playlists of American radio at that time.

With the groundwork done, the follow-up album, *Bridge Of Sighs*, released in 1974, became a US blockbuster and remains Trower's best-selling album to this day.

"I was definitely in sync with those albums," he says of *Bridge Of Sighs*. "In America, the FM stations were really powerful then. They started off as underground radio, and grew into being the mainstream. I think that's why we clicked. And I think because of Jim's voice as well, it helped the music to cross over. His voice took it into the mainstream."

The partnership between Trower and Dewar continued over 10 years and eight studio albums, including *For Earth Below* (1975), *Long Misty Days* (1976) and *In City Dreams* (1977).



Still taking it to the *Bridge* at 74: Trower in 2019.

## "I think ninety per cent of people who come to the shows have more than one copy of *Bridge Of Sighs*."

Their last album together was *Back It Up*, released in 1983.

"When we finished *Back It Up*, that was the last time that I saw him," Trower says of Dewar. "He went back up to Scotland and then he got ill. I never quite got to the bottom of what happened to him. His wife said he had to have an operation and something went wrong. But I'm not sure."

Dewar died in 2002, at the age of 59. Isidore, who left the Trower line-up after *Bridge Of Sighs*, also died at the age of 59, in 2009.

While Trower has evolved as a recording artist and gone through many changes as a live act, he has always featured the classic songs from those early albums in his set-list, and in recent years has reverted to the trio format with the formidable singer and bass player Richard Watts now taking the Dewar role.

"I'm very comfortable in a trio," Trower says. "And when I play live I have to reference the songs from those early albums. I think ninety per cent of people who come to the shows have got more than one copy of *Bridge Of Sighs*. Some of them are on to their third copy. It's a blessing to have such a potent album. There is still a magic about those

early records. Songs like *Daydream* [from *Twice Removed*], I always play that. It's a wonderful thing to have songs like that in your locker."

Much as he respects his legacy from the 70s, Trower would not want to turn back the clock.

"After a few years I got really sick of playing those huge hockey arenas because they were the most unmusical places. They were really horrible because the stages were always constructed on the day, out of scaffolding with boards on top, so nowhere in the room was there a musical resonance at all. I think at one time we were carrying the biggest PA that had ever been built, but you just could not get any music happening in those places. In the end I was so not enjoying it, I just came off the road for about five years. I'm sure it's a lot better now. The monitor systems now are so fantastic."

*Twice Removed From Yesterday* is an evocative title. What does it mean, precisely?

"I don't have any idea what that means," Trower says. "Jim wrote that lyric." 🎧

*Coming Closer to The Day* is out now via Mascot. Trower tours the UK in October.



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# Combat Rock

He gave up cage fighting to become a rock star, slinging out riffs instead of throwing punches. Now, armed with a new album and a ton of life experience, **Kris Barras** is making good on that promise.

Words: **Polly Glass** Photos: **James Sharrock**

**I**t's a summer evening at a biker festival in Germany. The beer is flowing, the atmosphere is upbeat, and the crowd are gagging for the artist soon to arrive on stage. Little do they know that said artist, Kris Barras, will end up almost killing the front row. Well, sort of.

Reeling from all the good vibes and a few too many strong local brews, Barras and his band play a killer show. Confident on stage at the best of times, tonight the singer/guitarist is practically flying already, so decides to take it up a level.

"I was loving it, I was having the best gig of my life," the 33-year-old enthuses later. "On the last song, I decided I was gonna do a stage dive—and the front row was all middle-aged women! And I just fucking *jumped*. I tried to call people forward, a trick I learned off Ty [Taylor] from Vintage Trouble, but they were a bit confused and..."

He laughs, a broad grin flashing through a neat sandy beard. This Kris Barras is much softer than the steely, 'game face' version conveyed in the media, honed in part by years as a professional MMA (mixed martial arts) fighter. As we discover during a couple of days on the road with Barras and co, he moves between the two.

"So yeah, I killed the front row. With my ass," he finishes. "I was a little bit sick off stage after."

That was your first and only stage dive?

"Yeah, but I loved it. I'd do it again."

Kris Barras is not just a guy who plays guitar and sings. He writes all his own songs. He edits and/or shoots all his own videos and promos. He handles merch and funding. More often than not he drives the tour van. On top of all that he fronts the Supersonic Blues Machine with ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons, and does filming work on the side—shooting music videos, live sessions, mini-documentaries on fighters... The day before we meet, he was shooting a wedding.

"That's my chill time," he says, smiling. "I enjoy filming. That stuff is easy to fit around touring, so it's the perfect side hustle. It's not like I'm Quentin Tarantino, but I'm a, what's the word... pro-am."

Barras's past life as a professional MMA fighter (also often referred to as cage fighting) is well documented, and until last year he was still involved as a trainer. He's still built like a fighter—with tattooed biceps to rival those of The Rock—but insists he's "much less healthy" when on tour.

We're on a tour bus right now, his band's home for the next few days, driving from Birmingham to Caerphilly Castle in Wales. They're playing a series of UK shows with Black Stone Cherry, and every spare inch of the bus is crammed with kit, although we do all have space to sit back and chat over coffee

**"When people say: 'Are you nervous?' it's got such negative connotations. But it's a natural response: fight or flight."**

—soundtracked by Mike the driver singing along to Cyndi Lauper's *True Colours* on the radio.

Somehow Kris Barras got pigeonholed as a blues guy. He sort of is; he's signed to the same label as Joe Bonamassa, Eric Gales and Walter Trout. Gary Moore was his first guitar hero (the influence of his late father), and the influences he name-checks typically include blues-based A-listers like Howlin' Wolf, Stevie Ray Vaughan, BB King...

But on the strength of his new album, *Light It Up*, the Black Stone Cherry billing makes a lot of sense. It's a rock album with lip-smacking immediacy and a vivid sense of all the genres Barras has studiously absorbed. There's southern crunch and bluesy bite in *What You Get*, heavy rock in *Ignite*, and

Richie Kotzen-esque fusion flourishes in *Not Fading*, a reminder of his younger days as a highly technical guitar teacher on websites like Lick Library and Shred Academy. And the tunes are spot-on throughout. The joyous *Counterfeit People* in particular says 'arena rock star' more than 'weekend blues warrior'.

"Traditional blues fans don't like me anyway," Barras says, spinning an NFL ball in his hands as our bus winds through Caerphilly's tiny streets. "There's people that do it a lot better than I do. They don't need *more* 12-bar, 'My baby left me' and all that."

**W**e pull up, and the bus is unloaded. The castle can be entered only via drawbridges, so gear is transported in vans while band and crew walk. They're a loyal, tight-knit team, even if Barras concedes he's not naturally a 'people person'. "I'm much more of an animal person," he muses, showing me pictures of his dogs back home in Torquay. "I have a low tolerance for bullshit. I don't particularly like social gatherings or large groups of people."

Most of his best friends are from his cage-fighting days, with comradeship found even in queues for first aid after fights.

"I fought a Russian guy who didn't speak English, a Polish guy, a guy from South Korea, but we'd still have some kind of signed language after," he says. "Some of the most gentle, kindest people I've ever met have been people I've met through the fighting world. And some of the nastiest people that I've ever met have been in the music industry, so go figure."

Inside the castle grounds, huge mixing desks and staging contrast sharply with 13th-century walls. The dressing room looks like a *Robin Hood* film set, so our photographer and the band dart between backdrops for pictures.

Growing up in Torquay, Barras was a "mostly As and A\*s" grammar school student, gearing up for law school. After GCSEs he got into his first band (having also started fighting as a hobby), gigging at local bars and making a tidy living out of it. At 17 he was driving a BMW into sixth form. Studying took a back seat.

"I was so far behind in my coursework, and one day my drama teacher said to me: 'You obviously don't want to be here, why are you here?'" he recalls. "And I said: 'Do you know what? That's the best bit of advice I've ever been given by a teacher.'"

He left school and got a job in a music shop with a studio underneath. He taught guitar there for a while, before opening his own teaching studio/store in a friend's drum shop.

He was 19.

For a couple of years or so the business thrived. Then, at the end of 2007, the financial crash happened, leaving Barras bankrupt at 22: "We ended up with a fuck-ton of stuff that we couldn't sell off, I closed the shop, caused me a lot of stress."

He's called away for sound-check, and we watch from the battlements.

**C**ome show time the castle grounds fill with punters bearing beers, bottles of rosé and sun cream. Falafel wraps and burgers are sold from food trucks. It feels like a mini-festival, or a really giant picnic. Barras, his wife Harriet, his mum and sister watch the opening act, southern ➤









Kings of the Castle: the Kris Barras Band lay siege to Caerphilly.

rock band Otis. Barras's affable, slick-haired bassist Elliott Blackler and his girlfriend join us.

Soon after, we find Barras pacing around the dressing room like a caged lion doing vocal warm-ups. Does he get nervous?

"I don't call it nerves," he says, *slightly* defensively. "My body knows it's about to go and do something. I can feel the energy in my hands, my stomach... If I didn't have that I'd be worried."

Minutes later Barras and his band are winning over the crowd of predominantly Black Stone Cherry fans. "Come on! I know it's ten pound a beer but you've gotta be a bit pissed by now!" Barras roars, to whoops that suggest they probably are. Fighter-honed bravado capitalised on, he's suddenly a fully fledged rock star as they dive into a cover of Zeppelin's *Rock And Roll*. Blackler's sharp bass chops and spread-legged swagger reflect his old job in a Red Hot Chili Peppers tribute; jazz-honed drummer Will is super-tight; keyboard player/producer Josiah J Manning's Jon Lord and Dr John influences emerge in deft flashes; everyone's on the money.

After the gig, Barras heads straight down to the merch stand and signs, shakes hands and hugs until everyone's happy.

By the time we're all back on the bus and bound for Aberdeen, everyone's exhausted, and talking seriously about merch sales. It's a long way from Barras's touring experience as a teen, fronting pop-rock barely-a-flash-in-the-pan Who's In The Room With Norman.

"How the hell did you find that out?!" he reels, to laughter. "But yeah, it was mainly a cover band. No

one can ever hear that stuff, it's fucking horrible. I could win over crowds with my guitar solos and putting on shows, but the songs were crap, my voice wasn't good enough. I didn't realise it at the time because I had people around me who were like: 'Wow, you're gonna be famous!' I was eighteen years old. I honestly believed I was going to be a rock star. Wow, you're the only person to ever bring that up."

Still, you did end up touring in America and recording an album in Philadelphia.

"That's right," he chuckles, head in his hands, revealing the words 'Boom Boom' tattooed across his knuckles. "Jesus Christ, Polly, you're a fucking encyclopedia of all the shit stuff in my life!"

professional fighting picked up in his twenties, in a way that music didn't. Intensive training and fights in Thailand, Las Vegas and beyond ensued. He opened his own gym, Fightworx, but still played bluesy rock covers at weddings and pubs.

Any wedding gig horror stories?

"Loads."

Care to share any?

"No," he says, laughing, before adding: "There's just incidents, not necessarily that I started, but that I got *involved* in." He stops, then continues with patient emphasis. "Weddings are vibrant places for people with alcohol. I was a wedding singer, who also happened to be a cage fighter, there were events that happened..."

As he cracks open a Cherry Pepsi, we recall his terse attitude to nerves back at the castle, and can't help thinking it was Kris the fighter talking.

"When people say: 'Are you nervous?' it's got such negative connotations," he reasons. "But

it's a natural response: fight or flight. Everyone has that. Fighting highlights this more than anything else. I've had guys who are absolute killers in the gym, and then he goes in the cage and he's like a little fucking house cat. And I've felt that. I'm not some invincible guy. You have to harness those feelings and turn it into something positive."

He estimates that he's performed with "ten or eleven" different line-ups of the Kris Barras Band. His best friend was their original bassist, but left to pursue family and work commitments. Other past members had similar stories.

"It comes back to 'If I don't do it, who does'. I've been in bands before, and... When you're starting out, trying to find four guys that have the same

## **"My dad got cancer and died six weeks later. As far as we knew he was a healthy man... It really changes how you see the world."**

Quality of the music aside, though, being in the US and playing gigs there must have been an exciting experience for a teenager from Devon?

"It was. But you know what? I took it all for granted," he sighs. "And it's one thing I always regretted throughout my twenties when I was doing fight stuff. I mean, we were playing bars, basically. We had a guy who had a bit of money, he loved music, he loved what we did and became our manager. It seems mental now, really. He was a great guy, though. I just took it all for granted. It's a shame, cos I remember looking back thinking: 'Fuck...' I wish I took it all in a bit more. But I'm lucky to have a second shot."

When that venture died, the opportunities for









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# Black Star Riders

Words: **Mick Wall** Portraits: **Will Ireland**

Scott Gorham takes his glasses off so that *Classic Rock*'s photographer can get some shots of him browsing through the racks in the basement of the record store. But there's a snag: "I can't see what records I'm looking at now..."

"Don't worry," says Ricky Warwick, standing next to him. "Just make sure you're not browsing through the Gay Techno section."

"You mean the Boys Town section?" I say.

"Yeah," says Gorham. "Like, I thought it said the *Boys Are Back In Town* section..."

The Black Star Riders frontmen crack up laughing. Photos duly taken, Scott retrieves his specs and they go back to browsing.

We're in Flashback Records, in très chic Islington, North London. Outside it is raining. Down here in the comfortably musty basement of the store, there is thunder.

"It's fifty quid total?" an aghast Warwick says, when told the terms of the deal *Classic Rock* have lain down. "Is it? I thought it was fifty quid each!" He stares balefully at the bundle of vinyl he's cradling in his arms.

Gorham is equally horror-struck. "You mean the whole thing is fifty? Holy shit! I'm gonna end up with one album and a CD."

Warwick's still not having it. "Naw, fifty quid each – that's what it said in the mail."

Well, all they've given me is fifty, I inform them.

Harrumph. Mutter. Scowl. And that's just the guy behind the counter.

Warwick shows me a good-quality vinyl copy of *Goats Head Soup*, the 1973 Rolling Stones album. Hit single: *Angie*. Hit track: *Star Fucker*.

"That's my favourite Stones album," he says. "It's not one of the Stones albums people talk about too much, but for me it's their best. I'm gonna have to put it back," he sighs. "I've got it on CD. I've got it on my iTunes..."

Gorham is concentrating: "Hmm... Led Zeppelin against Ella Fitzgerald..."

Fifty-three year-old Warwick says he has recently been "reincarnated as a vinyl guy".

Shiny black 12-inch records were what he grew up with. "But I ended up giving most of it away. Or I ended up losing bits of my collection moving houses. My kids come in the room now and go: 'You listening to your dinosaur records again, dad?'"

Gorham is 68, and likes to give the impression that he cares not a jot for whatever technological innovations may have been made in the world of music or indeed on planet Earth in general. "I have no idea what's going on out here," he says languidly, smiling.

He does though, presumably, own a record player on which to play the vinyl he is holding?

"I do. But it's in a cardboard box..."

"Here's an album I used to love," he says, holding up Traffic's 1967 debut album, *Mr Fantasy*. "This album here we used to listen to almost every fucking day. And you can still listen to it. It doesn't sound dated at all."

He holds up a copy of Stevie Wonder's *Live At The Talk Of The Town*, from 1970.

"I saw Steve Wonder live once in my life. When he was

still blind," he adds with a straight face. "You know he's having implants? There's a new implant they can put in. You don't actually see, it's more images. Like shadows and all that. At least it's something."

Gorham's on a roll. He picks up a Small Faces compilation album. "I love Steve Marriott. He was one of those guys who never really got the recognition he deserved, not internationally, and probably should have. Am I right in thinking that?"

Next he holds up a dusty *Led Zeppelin II*. "Come on, man. I gotta have that. The first metal band! They introduced it, right?"

He picks up some Frankie Miller. "Remember, Frankie, man?" I do. I worked with him in the late seventies, a nasty drunk. "I used to play tennis with him."

That wouldn't have been a five-setter presumably? "Well, it was as much as we could get through."

You sure it wasn't one of those old computer game machines with the black screen and the little white ball?

"No, man, it was proper, bona-fide tennis!"

Warwick shows me a Free compilation. "It would be good to have that one back on vinyl," he says. "Another one I had and lost somewhere."

He also owns a copy of *All American Alien Boy* by Ian Hunter. "Joe Elliott had played me *You're Never Alone With A Schizophrenic*, or something like that, and from that I began checking out all Hunter's

solo stuff."

Warwick was Elliott's best man at his wedding in 2004. The two of them have also worked together on each other's albums. Indeed, Elliott was in the frame to produce the Black Star Riders album *The Killer Instinct*, until Def Leppard's schedule got in the way. That's Leppard the huge Thin Lizzy fans. Funny old world, etc, part 194. ➤

"I love Steve Marriott. He never got the recognition he deserved."

SCOTT GORHAM





# BLACK STAR RIDERS



Ricky Warwick's happy to be taking *Completely Free* to the cash desk.



"Imagine how many albums you could have bought for fifty quid when you first joined Thin Lizzy. You'd have needed a van!"



"Hey, that guy looks like me!" Scott Gorham's vision isn't exactly 20/20 without his specs.

"Our generation is the last of the album generation. My kids listen to music all the time, but they skip through all the tracks really, really fast."

RICKY WARWICK

tracks really, really fast. But what's funny is that they always end up going back [in time]. They go: 'Hey dad, have you heard this band called The Who?' They're finding all these great old bands. I just think it's that the kids now don't sit still long enough to enjoy an album. When we bought an album, you went home and read the sleeve notes while you were listening to it, and listened to it until the finish. To have to set aside that time now, the

Gorham is now in the 'W' section. "Did you ever meet Johnny Winter?" he asks. "I remember being at the BBC with him and I had no idea that with albinos their eyesight goes really quickly. So he's playing mom, he's pouring out the champagne, but he's got his finger over the lip of the cup. I'm thinking: 'That's not very sanitary there, Johnny. You might have been picking your nose or something.' But it was so he would know when it was time to stop pouring. He was still like, 'I'm a tough guy, nothing wrong with me.'"

This segues neatly into other tough-guy guitarists Gorham has known.

"Dick Dale, right? He was the guy who if anybody at the gig gave him shit, he would put his guitar down, zip off this bomber jacket, take the guy out to the parking lot, beat the shit out of him, come back, put his guitar back on and fire it up again."

Eventually the three of us go to the counter to pay, and it comes to £61.94. So I bend the rules and cough up the extra £11.94. Shhh... don't tell anyone...

We repair to the coffee shop a few doors along and settle ourselves around a couple of tables in the corner at the back.

"The cappuccinos here are really good," Gorham says.

Warwick orders green tea. "I had a couple of stomach issues and I had to give up caffeine and dairy," he explains. "I'm all the better for it, but I still miss fifteen coffees a day."

Gorham: "What about cheeseburgers?"

Warwick: "I miss cheese."

All of us grew up buying albums. But it's different now. Are albums still relevant?

Gorham: "For me it is. I always say what else you got? Anybody can come up with one song. But what's the rest of the album like? What are you guys really like? People buying records for the one song, when there's so much artistic value when you get deeper into this project that you've just finished, and put your heart and soul into... I'm definitely an album guy. I will listen to all the tracks. Obviously I'm not gonna like everything that everybody does, but at that point I'll skip over the tracks. But at least I give it a shot."

"Our generation is the last of the album generation," says Warwick. "My kids listen to music all the time, but they skip through all the

kids are too distracted."

Gorham: "Well, they're into *Fortnite*, aren't they? I would be too if I was their age, because I'm a big videogame guy. I love playing them."

Warwick laughs. "Yeah, you can kill people, and dance while you're doing it!" Then he adds, more seriously. "I think if you genuinely are a music lover, no matter what age you are, and you discover vinyl and how good it sounds and that whole experience, I think there'll still be converts out there. You definitely lose something by digitising music. People say vinyl is selling more now than at any point in the last twenty-five years – so there's hope."

Black Star Riders have always gone for the more classic vinyl album approach, usually just 10 or 11 tracks long. Their excellent new album, *Another State Of Grace*, is the same: just 10 tracks.

"That's a conscious decision," says Warwick. "We sequenced it with that in mind. Call us foolish, but we did the album with a side one and a side two in mind. In my mind, side two starts with the





# CHECKOUT

LET'S SEE WHAT RICKY AND SCOTT SPENT OUR DOSH ON...



## Ricky Warwick

### *Free Completely Free*

"It's just got everything you want to hear from Free. It's got all the hits on there. I have an older sister who's responsible for a lot of my taste in rock, and this is one that she had. Just amazing! Obviously Paul Rodgers' voice, but Paul Kossoff's guitar, one of the greatest of all time."

### *Ian Hunter All American Alien Boy*

"I love the track *Letter To Britannia From The Union Jack*. Joe Elliot got me into this. I always liked Mott, but I'd never really listened to Ian's solo stuff. Joe was like: 'You've got to listen to Ian's solo stuff.' That was ten or twelve years ago. So I got into it quite late. Definitely worth the wait."



"I've always loved that in songs. A lot of stuff that I listen to, that I get a lot of melodies from, is northern soul. Like Eddie Floyd and Frankie Valli And The Four Seasons, Edwin Starr... The melodies are just amazing. So I like to have a bit of that but bring it into a hard rock song. Something like *Testify Or Say Goodbye* [from BSR's last album, *Heavy Fire*] obviously gives a very big nod to



## Scott Gorham

### *The Beatles Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*

"Everything that needs to be said about this record has already been said a thousand times. One of the most important albums of all time, etcetera. But for me there was an additional thing – the bass. I started out as a bass player, and when I first heard this record I was absolutely floored by McCartney's bass playing. Just phenomenal."

### *ZZ Top Eliminator*

"Thin Lizzy opened for them in America in the mid-seventies, and there was nearly a fight when their roadies wouldn't let us in the venue while they sound-checked. That night at the hotel, Billy Gibbons apologised for what happened and said he would pay for everybody's drinks for the rest of the night! Every time Lizzy played in Texas after that there would always be a bottle of Wild Turkey in the dressing room and a note from Billy. What a guy! What a band!"

Motown. Or from the new album, *Soldier In The Ghetto* is influenced by Curtis Mayfield and *Move On Up* – that's what inspired me to write that song. So for us the influences come from all over."

Gorham nods thoughtfully. "I loved being in Lizzy. But I really love this band where we are right now. If you'd told me ten years ago I'd be sitting here with Ricky right now, in a band with records on the charts... Well, I'm still wondering about that." ❗

*Another State Of Grace* is out on September 6 via Nuclear Blast. Black Star Riders tour the UK and Ireland in October.

ballad, *Why Do You Love Your Guns*. We thought that's what we should kick off side two with. We always do vinyl on our albums anyway. We always do good coloured vinyl, and [their label] Nuclear Blast have been great about that."

"That way you get the cream of the crop," Gorham points out. "You can come up with sixteen or seventeen songs, but you know the ten that really should have been there aren't going to get the attention that they should have gotten."

Warwick disliked the days of CDs with 14 or 15 tracks on them. "Even back in the days of vinyl, forty-five minutes was still a long time to try and keep your attention," he says. "I think anything longer than that didn't work – unless you were completely stoned off your trolley."

Some of the original Thin Lizzy albums were barely be 30-35 minutes.

"Sorry!" Gorham laughs. "We were never the kind of band that was like: 'Hey, let's do this great epic song.' We never really had the long guitar solos. We wanted the one-two punch. Just get in there, get the meat of the song. Let's get right into it."

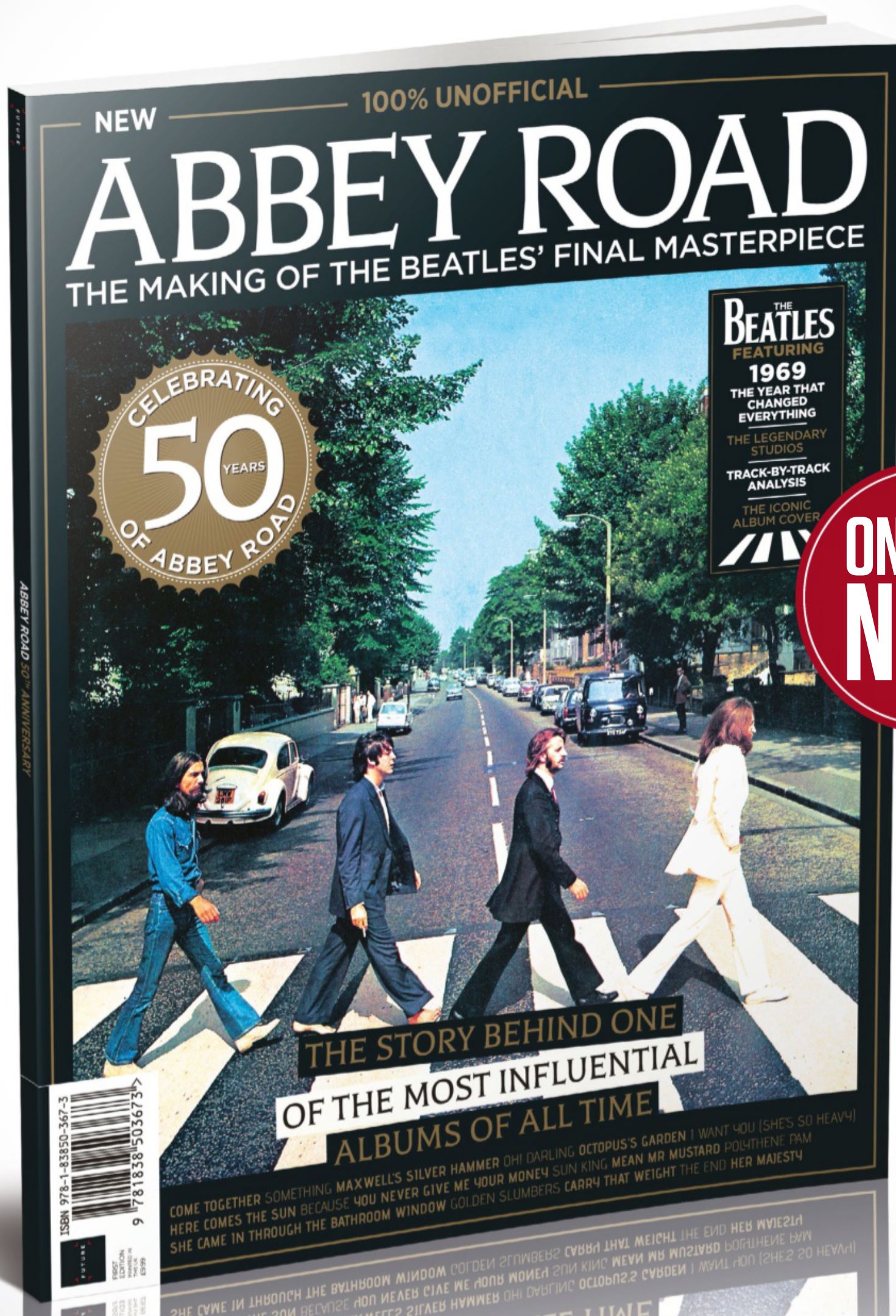
It's the same with the new Black Star Riders album, as evidenced on their sassy recent single, *Ain't The End Of The World*, or the glorious title track. Both sound absolutely momentous, yet barely go past three minutes. The Lizzy DNA is there for all to hear, but BSR have something else going on too now; they're far more their own musical force.

"Thanks," says Warwick. "It's ingrained, yes. Scott's always gonna have that sound, which is great. Lizzy were the soundtrack of my youth when I was a kid, and that sound and songwriting has always appealed to me. That's the stuff that I love, from Lizzy to Stiff Little Fingers to Motörhead to AC/DC. It's all fist-in-the-air but with a pop sensibility to it too."



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**The Cult**

Thirty years on, is *Sonic Temple* still something worthy of worship?



# THE HARD STUFF ALBUMS



## The Darkness

**Easter Is Cancelled** COOKING VINYL

Merry men tread winning tightrope between sublime and ridiculous.



With 2003's *Permission To Land* debut album, The Darkness put star-jumping, crotch-thrusting rock'n'roll back in the British charts. Sixteen years later, on new album *Easter Is Cancelled* the Lowestoft band seem lukewarm on their legacy. "Rock'n'roll is so uniform now," reckons bassist Frankie Poullain. "Everybody dresses the same, looks the same, sounds the same. It's pathetic. It deserves to die. Let's kill the cliché. Let's break the crucifix. That's partly what the album is about."

Sixth album *Easter Is Cancelled* puts its money where its mouth is, right from the thrilling flashpoint when a dirty Les Paul riff punctures the red-herring folksy opener *Rock And Roll Deserves To Die*. Granted, there's nothing on the album that's quite as stadium-ready as *I Believe In A Thing Called Love*, but every track here is whip-smart and shout-it-out hooky. And although the musical envelope is rarely shunted with both hands, the playful writing dips, dives and never does quite what you expect.

*How Can I Lose Your Love* is the must-hear, its heavy verses fused to a synth squiggle and a puppy-love chorus so sweet that you won't snigger. *Live 'Til I Die* is a killer story-song in which Justin Hawkins reflects on bullied school days and life-coaches the next generation of

rock pariahs. The title track manages to be both traditional and questing, with a cracking caveman riff from the Young brothers' playbook elevated by musings on man's moral fall. The mould is broken entirely by *Deck Chair* (a curio on which Hawkins's mannered croon is carried by synths and *Albatross* guitars), and *Heavy Metal Lover*, which fuses a soufflé-light pop-rock chorus, Big Four thrash riffs, and vocal stylings that flit from Marilyn Manson to the B-52s' Fred Schneider.

Elsewhere, *Choke On It* opens with the screech of a dial-up modem, then chugs like the 60s Batman theme as Hawkins delivers spiteful couplets in a cod-Gallagher sneer ('How's a man supposed to shine, when all you do is fookin' whine?'). Finally, *We Are The Guitar Men* nails The Darkness's colours to the genre's mast ('We are the guitar men, long live rock'n'roll'), as Hawkins flays his axe on a finger-tap outro that Eddie Van Halen's lawyers will hopefully never hear.

If you hate The Darkness, move along. But for those who remain strangely tickled by their frivolous, heartfelt one-offmanship, every track here will prick up your ears. *Easter* might be cancelled, but for rock fans Christmas has come early.



Henry Yates

## Wednesday 13

**Necrophaze** NUCLEAR BLAST

**It's alive!**

Finally, the album upon which the former Frankenstein Drag Queen From Planet 13 in chief delivers his defining masterpiece. Accusing America's favourite ghoul scout (known to the IRS as Joseph Michael Poole) of maturing is possibly an allegation too far, but his 27-year quest to construct a compendium of EC Comics 'n' cheese-before-bedtime-fuelled nightmares, R-Rated, shlocky horror creature features and Cooper-informed, rotted-tongue in-festered-cheek, gore-gargling, metal-spiked, hi-octane splatter-glam into a mainstream-seducing mega-rock monster appears to have reached its ultimate incarnation.

Here, then, is *Necrophaze*, a 12-track creation more than capable of raising itself from the slab to terrorise the local townspeople and, very probably, perform *Putting On The Ritz* as an encore. With guest appearances from Stone Sour's Ray Moryaga, Cristina Scabbia of Lacuna Coil and others, not least Alice Cooper himself, in something of a Vincent Price role, *Necrophaze* echoes AC's Frankenstein-feeding metal era, reanimates classic 80s tropes with lightning bolts of contemporary 'Knot ferocity. Spooky, ooky keyboard washes, serial killers, hatchets, broad cinematic dynamics, assured performances and Wednesday himself: the complete beast at last, in his element and never better.



Ian Fortnam

## Dan McCafferty

**Last Testament** EARMUSIC

**First solo album in more than 30 years from former Nazareth vocalist.**

In 2013 Dan McCafferty called time on his distinguished career as the singer with Nazareth for health reasons. This return is a determinedly soulful, stately and considered reconfiguring of his bruised but still mighty talent.

Czech accordion and keyboard playing co-writer Karel Marik provides alternatively rootsy and sombrely anthemic settings for McCafferty's lyrics, in which the serious matters of long relationships rent asunder (*Why, Looking Back*) and reconciled (*Sunshine*) are measured out with aged experience, poise and gravity. Illness has not diminished McCafferty's unmistakable voice, and here it's given space to

breathe and wears its scars and ravages with pride. Magisterially blitzed, piano-lead beauty *Refugee* and its imposing and dramatic counterpart, the mighty *Mafia*, provide the depth, and *Right To Fail* even adds a Brechtian flourish.

Painstaking and thoughtful throughout, *Last Testament* is a surprise that actually lives up to its title; a fierce, cold-eyed survey of life's triumphs and regrets, searingly honest, naturally dramatic.



Gavin Martin

## Kadaver

**For The Dead Travel Fast**

NUCLEAR BLAST

**German black magicians on reassuringly spooky form.**



The devil, we are told, is in the detail. And so it would seem when you see

the sleeve of this Berlin trio's fifth album, shot in the shadow of a Transylvania castle, in the grainy, ghostly style of Black Sabbath's debut. It provides reassurance that this trio are not messing about. And while they owe a fair debt to the Sabs in the strangulated Ozzy-isms and enjoyably tri-tone-laced riffage of *Evil Forces*, elsewhere their reluctance to reach straight for the riff is intriguing. *Demons In My Mind* is shrouded in swirling psychedelia, *Long Forgotten Song* sludges through satisfyingly slow stoner-y malevolence, and, as if to satanically invert all in their path, *The End* opens the set with only zombified strums and a distant voice for company. 'Breathe your final breath, it's time to die,' it concludes. Do your worst, chaps.



Johnny Sharp

## Samantha Fish

**Kill Or Be Kind** ROUNDER

**Kansas blueser packs in the soul on her sixth solo album.**

Samantha Fish has spent the past few years quietly establishing herself as a blues-rooted guitarist/singer to be reckoned with. In the process she hasn't only removed herself from the gender ghetto ("Ooh, look, a woman! With a guitar!") she's also developed an eclectic rootsy style that separates her from today's (mostly male) profusion of 12-bar, Stevie Ray worshipping traditionalists.

*Kill Or Be Kind* is not a by-the-book blues record. There's actually more in the way of soul









## Opeth

**In Cauda Venenum** MODERBOLAGET/NUCLEAR BLAST

Album number 13 is a lavish, meticulously layered yet intimate feast for the senses.



For some rock stars at a certain point in their career, 'luxury' means material goods: a country pile with a wine cellar; an extravagant collection of John Varvatos jackets; a silly car, or three... Then there are those who channel this sense of opulence (and hard-earned stripes) into their music. On *In Cauda Venenum* (Latin for 'poison in the tail'), Opeth fall comfortably into this category.

One of Sweden's most widely recognised rock exports, in 20 years they've transmogrified from growling metal youths (e.g. 1995's *Orchid*), to progressive metal adults (2001's *Blackwater Park*) to 21st-century prog monarchs (everything from 2011's *Heritage* onwards). Armed with an orchestral arsenal of chunky rock guitars, acoustic guitars, strings, majestic harmonies, keyboards and more, they've made their bed here and are enjoying lying in it.

Not that this is mere comfort-zone indulgence. For starters, *In Cauda Venenum* is their first album sung in Swedish (there's a replica version in English; the Swedish version is the "official" one). And it's a testament to the allure of Mikael Åkerfeldt's singing that the emotional impact isn't lessened when you don't understand what he's saying. Haunting, almost baroque vocal blasts and layers in the likes of *Svekets Prins* (*Dignity*) transcend

language. *Minnets Yta* (*Lovelorn Crime*) is a sublime ballad, propelled by some stunning guitar soloing. Lead guitarist Fredrik Akesson could eat most shredders for breakfast, but it's in the searing, simpler passages peppering this record that really show what a great player he is.

You'll find progressive rock in the engaging vein of solo Steven Wilson in the likes of *Charlatan* – good 'n' rocky but jazzier, like a Tarkovsky film soundtrack interpreted at a rock/metal festival. There's even a whiff of latter-day Ghost in the guitar-chugging, straightforward likes of *Hjärtat Vet Vad Handen Gör* (*Heart In Hand*). And despite some rollicking geekoid excess, it ultimately prizes melodic emotional heft over the ears-bleeding black metal they once sought. Often exorbitant, yes, but human too.

If you're vehemently anti-prog – if the mere suggestion of organs and convoluted time signatures brings you out in hives – then you probably won't like this album. Not that Åkerfeldt and co. will care. At this point they're not concerned with world domination, but with making the very best version of the music they like right now. So if you do like a bit of in-depth rock luxury in your life, *In Cauda Venenum* delivers by the caseload.



Polly Glass

## Beth Hart

**War In My Mind** PROVOGUE

Grammy-winning singer-songwriter keeps on keeping it real.



Beth Hart has had a troubled past, one she has to battle with on a daily

basis, fending off the demons with religion, meditation – and music. From her father's abandonment at an early age, to the loss of her sister – the latter she addresses on the richly poignant *Sister Dear* – she is clearly sitting on a volcano of trauma. And it rumbles palpably through this album. You can hear it on the tremulous, Nina Simone-esque title track, or the raw frankness of *Bad Woman Blues* on which she crowns herself the 'Queen of pain'.

Despite all this, there are times when you wish that the tussle and agony of these songs would buckle their structures, tear through the fabric of the production, mess up the often orthodox stylings. The vocoderised effects of *Let It Grow* are promising but give way to a more conventional approach; there are moments when she threatens to go full-on power ballad. Thankfully, however, *I Need A Hero* is not a cover, but a minimal but affecting self-examination; 'I am so thirsty but won't drink the water'.



David Stubbs

## Doctors Of Madness

**Make It Stop** CARGO

Theatrical but forceful band's first new album in 40 years.



The Doctors Of Madness were one of those bands formed just as rock's

bowels were churning in readiness to splat out punk, who got lost in the shuffle. Led by the charismatic Richard Strange, they made some great records, each one filled with the theatrical flourishes of Bowie and Brel as well as the nihilistic thrust of the Velvet Underground. In a parallel universe they would be part of rock's rich tapestry, but over the years they've increased their cult following and been testified about by many famous fans.

Now they return, with an album that both picks up where they left off 40 years ago and adds a new spikiness and concision to the repertoire.

Strange is as splenetic and acerbic as ever, while the music rushes on with a sneering crunch. *Make It Stop* is that rare thing: a reunion record for new fans as well as old.



David Quantick

## Crashdiet

**Rust** FRONTIERS

Still sleazing to please.



With *Rust*, Swedish sleaze-rock survivors Crashdiet have

unloosed one of the most unapologetic albums of the year – although you'll probably be checking your calendar to see which year that actually is.

From their inception in 2005, they have held a steadfast allegiance to and adoration of overdose-era Crüe, with all its snarly punk-millionaire arena rockisms, and *Rust* certainly does not deviate from that platinum-embossed template. It's state-of-the-art 1987 drunk-at-the-prom party anthems end to end, with at least a couple of certified future classics (the blazing *Stop Weiriding Me Out* and the melodic-but-punchy *Idiots*) and a bunch of all-night rockers that get the job done.

There is mounting evidence that Crashdiet will eventually morph into a more AOR-oriented affair à la latter-day Backyard Babies – take the soft-metal title track or obligatory power ballad *Waiting For Your Love* as glaring examples – but as of right now *Rust* will certainly do the job for all you good-time-all-the-time types.



Sleazegrinder

## Robbie Robertson

**Sinematic** UMC

The Band leader's Gothic gangsta album.



The tenth instalment in Robertson's curiously misshapen solo

career takes cues from his long history with film director Martin Scorsese, hence the crass title pun. Spiky guitars, itchy rhythms and gnarled electro blues in spacey atmospheres with violent scenarios predominate. Van Morrison guests on the standout lead track *I Hear You Paint Houses*, from Scorsese's upcoming film *The Irishman*.

DJ Howie B, Glen Hansard and Citizen Cope are also on hand,



but Robertson's gauche lyrics, as on the Oriental voodoo of *Shanghai Blues* and obligatory requiem for The Band *Once Were Brothers* are hard to take. Additionally, his mannered yet characterless lead vocal is a recurring weak link in the fug.

A muddled attempt to signal contemporary relevance, as The Band's classic *Big Pink* debut turns 50, *Sinematic* is an ungainly segue to Robertson's legacy.



Gavin Martin

Laurence Jones Band

Laurence Jones Band

TOP STOP MUSIC

Grown-up blues from a young head on old shoulders.



The question of authenticity in blues has long been obsolete. Hardly anyone currently working in the genre has been through the kind of hardships that the founders suffered, and instead they stand as custodians. So while Jones, the millennial poster boy for the future of blues, asserts 'I've been hurt, I've been troubled, I've been down on my luck' on the tastefully rollicking *Everything's Gonna Be Alright*, on his new album there's a sense of celebration and carrying the torch.

Just 27 years old, Jones has a maturity beyond his years, with each track here tastefully crafted,

although he allows himself to let rip in a blaze of guitar histrionics on *I Am Waiting*, and strips things down to blues basics on the ultra-traditional *Long Long Lonely Ride*. A cover of The Beatles' *Day Tripper* feels a little pointless, but overall there's a sense that he's ready to step into the shoes of Stevie Ray Vaughan or Eric Clapton to walk against the tide of popularism towards the music of the past that he loves so much.



Emma Johnston

Hawk Eyes

Advice DRAKKUR ENTERTAINMENT

Fourth album from art-metal's West Yorkshire wing.



Leeds band Hawk Eyes have been paddling in the alt.metal shallow end for more than a decade, with little more than the odd mid-afternoon third-stage festival slot to show for it. Their fourth album suggests they deserve more than that.

*Advice* sits somewhere between Queens Of The Stone Age's too-cool-for-school rock'n'roll deconstructionism and the modern aggro-prog of Mastodon or Baroness. Tracks like *New Greek Fire* and *Hand In My Heart Cage* convulse with noise, and arcane references to head-spinning author Thomas Pynchon and mid-century Soviet Russia are dropped in

along the way. And bonus points for enlisting *Rocky Horror Show*/*Crystal Maze* nutter Richard O'Brien to add a layer of theatrical spoken-word weirdness to *Smoke*.

For all that, it's not quite the northern powerhouse it could have been; the barrage of sounds and ideas mask the fact that it's missing a stone-cold killer song or two, which is all that's standing between them and wider recognition.



Dave Everley

Korn

The Nothing ROADRUNNER

A band constantly growing.



There are moments on this record when you're convinced that Korn must be channelling a love for Queen. Some of the vocal harmonies and instrumental passages do hark back to such an influence, as on *The Seduction Of Indulgence*. But Korn do a lot more than indulge a Freddie Mercury fascination.

*The Nothing* is a dark, emotional journey that vocalist Jonathan Davis admits comes from a very personal place. *Finally Free* and *The Ringmaster* are drenched in disturbing rhythms and portents, yet the album is never inaccessible. It has depth while also being obviously melodic, thereby

making things work on more than one level. It's also perhaps Korn's best album this century.

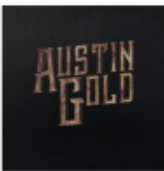


Malcolm Dome

Austin Gold

Austin Gold JIG-SAW

Peterborough rocks again, on mini-album stop-gap.



This Cambridge-shire quintet's 2017 debut, *Before Dark Clouds*, was an irresistible love letter to ZZ Top crunch, drainpipe-tight power-pop, wailing glam and easy-rolling country soul, arranged and analogue-recorded with care. Two years on, and that freewheeling approach has been streamlined into deliberate anthems which showcase David James Smith's full-throttle voice, locating them more closely in Free's Britrock lineage.

*We Are Lightning* succeeds best in its roof-raising mission, alternating heavy guitars and Plant-like vocal histrionics with creamy Beatlesque melodies and harmonies, alongside an invitation to 'stand up, this is who we are'. *Lifelines* similarly claims that 'we'll be a million strong', although quite what the Austin Gold Army stand for and where they're marching remains vague. *Caught On You* reverts to the band's former strengths, emphasising Hammond, buzzing guitars and the reverb-drenched

'tish' of cymbals. Such attention to detail still serves them better than grasping for glory.



Nick Hasted

Hellyeah

Welcome Home ELEVEN SEVEN

Nu metal lives to fight another day on band's sixth album.



Hellyeah drummer Vinnie Paul passed away last year, but

his uncompromising style lives on in *Welcome Home*, the band's sixth album. A supergroup of sorts (frontman Chad Gray formerly led Mudvayne, guitarist Tom Maxwell comes from Nothingface), Hellyeah still wear their influences on their sleeve, from opener 333's Suicidal Tendencies punky thrash vibe to the pure Slipknot nu-metal angst of *Oh My God* and *Black Flag Army*, both of which seem to be beaming in straight outta 2001. Elsewhere, the spectre of prime Alice In Chains (*At Wicks End*) and Deftones (the title track) run rampant.

As dated as voluminous jeans and wallet chains, and somewhat lacking in real character of its own, there is nevertheless a certain charm to this album, and it's sure to trigger a nostalgia trip in those who came of age at the turn of the current century.



Emma Johnston

ROUND-UP: SLEAZE



Short Fuses: primal rock'n'roll from the one-time Midwest Motörhead.

Short Fuses

Dawn Of The Deaf SELF-RELEASED



Minneapolis action rockers the Short Fuses haven't released an album since 2003, but then again nor have I, so who's counting? The good news is that they haven't missed a beat since

their salad days as the Midwest Motörhead, and *Dawn Of The Deaf* serves up a hot platter of primal rock'n'roll anchored by the jungle roar of Miss Georgia Peach. At under two minutes, the furious punker *You Ain't Shit (Without A Leather Jacket)* is probably not the centrepiece of the album, but it must be highlighted because, let's face it, it's the

truth. It's almost like the Fuses awoke from their 15-year slumber specifically to remind us of that. Elsewhere they blast away at full-throttle MC5-meets-Zeke eardrum-melters like *Motorcycle Pill* and *Furiosa*. And while there's a couple of slower, Danzig-y sex'n'death churners, there ain't a ballad for miles.



Deviltrain

Troubled Times SELF-RELEASED



No false advertising with that band name, man. Germany's Deviltrain do in fact sound like some black-smoke-belching beast barreling recklessly down the railroad tracks, particularly on full-on 70s power-doom crunchers like *Won't Let Go* or *Thundermachine*. The album gets bluesy in places too, if that's your bag, but mostly *Troubled Times* is your basic motel shoot-out soundtrack.



Thunderroads

Thunder City Burning

DEAD BEAT



Tokyo sleaze-hounds born of leather and venom, plying vicious Detroit motor-rock with no concern for safety. Opener *Last Day* burned down my house. *RIP Baby I Hate You* knocked out the power for three miles around me. *Saturday Night Rock N Roll* killed my whole family. I'm not sure you're ready for this shit, but it's gonna eat your face, believe it.



By Sleazegrinder

Zip-Tie Handcuffs

Warm Shadows KING PIZZA



It's garage rock and it's even got some 70s arena-rock harmonies in there, but it's all blasted through a buzz-saw grind of overdriven fuzz and the kind of in-your-face punk attitude that makes Boston such a hilariously hostile place to live. And then outta nowhere come crazy Peter Frampton guitar heroisms. If you don't love it, you are some kind of dummy for sure.



Sweet Nothin'

New Generation SELF-RELEASED



Effortlessly swaggering high-energy rock'n'roll from Albuquerque. You might expect a little dusty 10-gallon Eddie Spaghetti cowboy-punk magic, given their location - and you get it for sure, especially on the climactic *Rock N Roll Fever* - but mostly this EP is just a heads-down, puke-on-the-floor Saturday-night fist-fight, and it's a blast. I mean, there's an MC5 cover, for Chrissakes. These dudes know what's up.



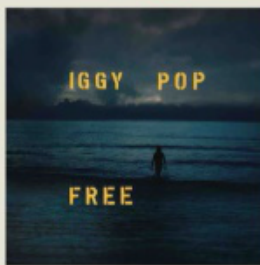




## Iggy Pop

**Free** CAROLINE INTERNATIONAL

Musing on mortality and pornography, Iggy dives deep into *Blackstar* territory.



It should come as no surprise that James Newell Osterberg Jr. is still pushing the musical envelope at 72. Despite his reductive reputation as perennial punk godfather, Iggy has always had a rich cultural hinterland, dabbling in jazz and avant-rock, exotic chansons and far-flung collaborations. Perhaps more surprising is just how boldly experimental he sounds on *Free*, a poetic rumination on creeping mortality and late-life regret, couched in sumptuous electro-jazz arrangements. Pop's eighteenth solo album, it will inevitably draw parallels to Bowie's *Blackstar*, and rightly so. But this is autumnal contemplation Iggy style. He may be in downbeat mood, but he still came to kick the Grim Reaper's ass.

Musically, *Free* mostly features gleaming sonic collages woven from wafting trumpet, textured electronica and fluid 'guitarscapes'. But the key instrument here, of course, is Iggy's magnificently ruined voice, increasingly rumbling and crumbly with age.

Does this adventurous mash-up hold together? On most tracks, emphatically yes. *Sonali* lays Iggy's stream-of-conscious musings on love, booze and parking spaces over skittery drum'n'bass, to deliciously strange effect. *Page* is a lush sci-fi ballad, while *We Are The People* delivers a spoken-word sermon full of punchy

defiance in dark times. A cosmic-jazz setting of the beloved Dylan Thomas poem *Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night* also builds to a compelling storm of soulful, feverish intensity.

The nearest thing to a classic Iggy rocker here is *Loves Missing*, a zombie-croaking guitar-twanger slung around a descending chord sequence that could almost be *I Wanna Be Your Dog* half a century later. The lyric may hint at wintry despair, but the net effect still feels like a potent throwback to Pop's Berlin-era Bowie collaborations.

Admittedly not all these free-form, off-the-map detours hit paydirt; *James Bond* seems to shoot for finger-snapping Nancy Sinatra jazz-pop novelty zing, but Iggy's lumbering delivery lacks the required pep and polish, and *Dirty Sanchez* is a messy, jabbering, scatological rant about online pornography that barely transcends rehearsal-room joke status.

Overall, however, *Free* is easily Iggy's most ambitiously left-field album since *Zombie Birdhouse* in 1982, and arguably the boldest experiment of his entire career. Even if this is his *Blackstar*, it smacks more of creative rebirth than of encroaching death. Which is just about the most punk statement any 72-year-old could make.



Stephen Dalton

## Tom Keifer Band

**Rise** CLEOPATRA

Gravel-throated ex-Cinderella frontman re-enters the fray.



Cinderella may have looked like an explosion in a wig factory when they arrived in 1986, but frontman Tom Keifer always had more grit than your average hair-metal bozo. His second solo(ish) album in six years – and only the sixth album he's made in four decades – *Rise* takes Keifer's bluesy, rootsy rock'n'roll swagger and gives it a modern rock respray that puts it in roughly the same ball park as latter-day Cinderella acolytes Halestorm.

It's a convincing mash-up of the kind of old and the sort of new. *The Death Of Me* and *Waiting On The Demons* sound punchy and modern, although Keifer's wildcat gargle – a sound that makes Rod Stewart sound as crystal as Sarah Brightman – will always anchor it in the classic. It's a real shame that Cinderella seem to have gone the way of the dodo for the second and likely final time, but this is a fine substitute.



Dave Everley

## Steel Panther

**Heavy Metal Rules**

STEEL PANTHER INC

Poodle-rock pussy grabbers fuck their way to album No.5.



On their new album reviewed elsewhere in this issue, The Darkness

display their growing knack for balancing frivolity with widescreen musical ambitions. There is no such creative dilemma for LA spoof-glam cretins Steel Panther, whose stock-in-trade remains big, brash, courgette-in-the-gusset party anthems about fucking bitches on rooftops. *Heavy Metal Rules* is shallow as a splash of sputum, but proves a guiltier pleasure than the masturbation detailed on opening track *All I Wanna Do Is Fuck (Myself Tonight)*.

Putting the #MeToo movement to one side, there are schoolboy sniggers to be had from moments like *Always Gonna Be A Ho* ('Is there no man you haven't laid/Has your vagina never seen the shade?'). But, as ever, what saves this album from one-spin status is the Panther's ear for a hook; parody or otherwise, *Fuck Everybody* and

*Gods Of Pussy* are tunes to enjoy even after the smirks have faded.



Henry Yates

## 69 Eyes

**West End** NUCLEAR BLAST

Toothsome display from the Helsinki vampires.



We officially live in a world of endless horrors, both banal and Lovecraftian, so

the Halloween-y bullshit that once seemed over-the-top on latter-day 69 Eyes albums just seems like gritty reality these days. While this album does have its schlocky cult-horror moments (*Last House On The Left*, *Burn Witch Burn*), for the most part it's just dark, menacing and snaggle-toothed in the best way possible. Frontman Jyrki's ancient croak is as pleasantly Lugosian as ever, and the twin-guitar firepower of Bazie and Timo Timo keep things cranked up to biker-gang velocity. A near-apocalyptic parable with side-stories about lady ghostriders (the searing *Cheyanna*) and blistering odes to the black leather hordes (*Two Horns Up*, *Outsiders*), it's basically the tough, brooding Iggy Pop record that, let's face it, he's never gonna make.

Thirty years down the road and the Eyes still have it.



Sleazegrinder

## Diesel Park West

**Let It Melt** PALO SANTO

Ninth album in 30 years.

They're probably not living like princes do.



Once the supposedly commercial rock arm of the Food label,

Leicester's Diesel Park West made records that sounded like stadium fillers, even when they were struggling to actually fill clubs. They've had a remarkably stable line-up (leader John Butler, two members from the 80s, and since 2007 ex-Crazyhead drummer Rob Morris), their staying power is commendable, but they're not treading water.

Underpinned by Butler's elegiac rasp, *Let It Melt* plays to the band's strengths: heroic anthems, and an optimistic belief in the redemptive power of rock. Like a more jet-propelled Jet, the title track is the most rootsy they've been in a while, the turbo-charged *Pictures In The*



Hall is an ear worm, the busy *The Golden Mile* hurtles along like *Let's Spend The Night Together*, and when they slow it down on *Scared Of Time* they pack an elegant emotional punch. How did we ever let this band slip through the cracks?



John Aizlewood

## The Defiants

**Zokusho** FRONTIERS

Thought their debut was outstanding? Then brace yourself for this one.



Comprising members of the current Danger Danger and the same band's former lead singer, Paul Laine, The Defiants not only made the melodic hard rock album of 2016, they also performed one of the same year's most rock'n'roll gigs, with a spectacularly refreshed Laine brattishly hurling a bottle of Jack Daniel's across the stage at the Rockingham Festival in Nottingham. Now the band are back to reclaim their crown.

A decade after the *Revolve* album, with the group ruling out new recordings and including a cameo from Steve West on drums, *Zokusho* (Japanese for 'sequel' or 'next chapter') is as good as it's gonna get for starving fans of D2. And, believe me, that's pretty bloody good indeed. From *Love Is The Killer* to the finale of *Drink Up!*, these 11 tracks stand head and shoulders above anything else likely be heard within the genre before the end of 2019.



Dave Ling

## Piston

**Piston** (SELF-RELEASED)

Midlands trad rockers' debut.



'Come on come on, feels so right, come on come on, tonight's the night.' You only get one chance to make a first impression, and this no-nonsense quintet from Cannock make it clear from the opening seconds of their debut album that nuanced Brexit debates and concept themes about the impending apocalypse are not on the agenda. 'Come on get down, pedal to metal, we wanna party like it's eighty-nine,' they continue on *Go Now*, and you're unlikely to complain, given the irresistible analogue rock thunder surrounding those sentiments.

Although the above might

suggest that Piston have a penchant for a carefree 30-year-old sonic vintage, this album is no hair-metal glam racket. The AC/DC-ish riff, stomp and chant of *Rainmaker* and the anthemic crowd-baiter *Let Us Rise* are more about enjoying the basic pleasures of straight-ahead, heartwarming, headbanging hard rock.



Johnny Sharp

## Whiskey Myers

**Whiskey Myers** SNAKEFARM

The spirit of Skynyrd is alive and well.



Three years ago, Whiskey Myers came of age with their fourth album *Mud*, produced by Brent Cobb. Their self-titled fifth is self-produced, four songs longer, and maintains the band's upward trajectory.

Coming from East Texas gives this seven-piece a keen sense of country. But while they cite Hank Williams and Waylon Jennings, the delivery is usually more Ronnie Van Zant and they sound first and foremost like a southern rock band. They do, though, switch effectively between heavy-duty stomps (opener *Die Rockin, Bitch* etc) and chick-a-boom with lap steel and harmonica (*Rolling Stone, Houston County Sky*). Their lyrics – written mostly by frontman Cody Cannon – are witty, and the band are as at home taking it slow (as on *Bury My Bones*) as when pushing the pedal to the floor (witness *Gasoline*, a bar-room brawler with a fabulous wah-wah solo). The album closes with *Bad Weather*, which fades teasingly on the record but promises to be a *Free Bird*-type monster live.



Neil Jeffries

## Temples

**Hot Motion** ATO

Pop and psych, masterfully woven together.



You can't go wrong making retro psych, the stopped clock of musics that's fashionable at least twice a decade. Kettering moonchildren Temples emerged in the wake of Tame Impala, but couldn't have imagined themselves bandwagon jumpers. That they're now centre-left of a new psych generation is testament to the surprising

cultural penetration of Kevin Parker's wormhole pop.

*Hot Motion*, Temples' third record, has the same boons and issues as their 2014 debut *Sun Structures* – it's a joyful, relentlessly catchy recreation of Woodstock-era sounds, flecked with touches of northern soul (*It's All Coming Out*), glam (*The Howl*) and Sabbath (*Atomise*), without having many mind-bending, Low-like ideas of its own. But the buzzing glam swirls of *The Beam* and *Step Down*, the none-more-Tame *You're Either On Something* and the air of a hallucinogenic Two Door Cinema Club on *Context* do enough melodically to compensate.

Few psych bands pay such attention to tuneage, especially ones who look like walking exhibits from the 1968 section of Pink Floyd: Their Mortal Remains; their hooks seem to call to you from misty, far-off shores, promising mystical rave-ups. Drift in.



Mark Beaumont

## Boy & Bear

**Suck On Light**

NETTWERK MUSIC GROUP

Embattled Aussies make a beautiful comeback with album number four.



If the phrase 'indie folk rock' strikes the fear of God into you, don't panic. While that's the tag Boy & Bear have apparently been saddled with, there isn't the slightest whiff of Mumford & Sons tainting *Suck On Light*, the fourth album from the Aussie quintet. Think instead of the warm and enveloping melodicism that once – pre-unpleasant allegations – made Ryan Adams so special.

The album marks a return (after a four-year break forced by frontman David Hosking battling illness), and, as the nights draw in, reveals itself delicately as an ideal soundtrack to the autumnal months, thanks in no small part to Hosking's beautiful, drily emotional vocals, instantly as comforting as a favourite blanket and as honestly engaging as an old friend.

Raw edges are non-existent, but these 12 echoey, unfussy, beautifully produced tracks have been allowed to breathe and take on a spark life that will appeal instantly to fans of bands like The National.



Emma Johnston

# BEST OF THE REST

Other new releases out this month.

## Swedish Death Candy

**Are You Nervous?** HASSLE

From phase-shifted psychoactive psych to deep-in-the-desert QOTSA, London-based trio SDC blend youth, dynamism and anxiety to excellent effect on this emphatic and experimental second album. **8/10**

## Little Bob Blues Bastards

**New Day Coming** FREEWORLD

Diminutive R&B belter Leetle Bob: as Gallic as Lautrec, yet somehow as Canvey as Wilko. While his bastards honk themselves dizzy, Bob sounds as weary as an 80s Iggy Pop. **6/10**

## Miss June

**Bad Luck Party** FRENCHKISS

Blending a serrated edge of Sonic Youth bite with a SCUM manifesto's worth of Le Tigre femme power, Annabel Liddell's NZ quartet deliver a punchy, strident debut. **7/10**

## The Pukes

**Never Mind The Buffet** HOO HA

A punk ukulele band. It's happening. Deal with it. Three plinking women up front, two lads at the rear. All original tunes, a bizarre unexpected charm, and even chords for joining in. 1-2-3-4! **7/10**

## Block Buster

**Losing Gravity** FRONTIERS

Genuinely teenaged Nordic newbie quartet match reassuringly brutal riffing with slick melodic sensibilities and priceless 'DC swing. With songwriting chops to the fore, BB are ones to watch. **7/10**

## L'Epee

**Diabolique** A RECORDINGS

Pitched somewhere between Cale-era Velvets and *Reverence*-era Jesus And Mary Chain, Brian Jonestown Massacre's Anton Newcombe provides a tense cinematic backdrop to Emmanuelle Seigner's deadliest deadpan ennui-soaked Gallic cool. **7/10**

## Danny Beardsley

**Blood From A Stone** SELF RELEASED

Parallax Method guitarist Beardsley takes centre-stage with an assured set of complex yet accessible material. A strong vocal, a hint of Cornell, it's an album you'll admire rather than love. **6/10**

## One Eleven Heavy

**Desire Path** BEYOND BEYOND IS BEYOND

Channeling Frisco psych Americana, *One Eleven Heavy*-season Grateful Dead tropes with engaging Stones-y swagger and the down-home bounce of an adrenalised Allman Brothers. Triumphal stuff. **8/10**

## Kobra And The Lotus

**Evolution** NAPALM

Flashes of genuine fire are persistently submerged beneath thick coats of production gloss to accommodate and accentuate Kobra Paige's faultlessly saleable musical-theatre vocal. Magnificent, yeah, but mostly meh. **6/10**

## Tiger Army

**Retrofuture** RISE

Musically: part Stray Cats (three-piece, stand-up bass, rock'n'rollabilly) part psycho – a dash of Man Or Astroman? shlock. Vocally: Nick 13 croons like a Pound Shop Morrissey. Oh dear. **4/10**

## Gruff Rhys

**Pang!** ROUGH TRADE

Highlife electronica meets understated Celtic folkiness on charmingly whimsical, multifaceted, Welsh language (with a short lapse into Zulu) sixth album from the ex-Super Furry Animals vocalist. **7/10**

## Kal Marks

**Let The Shit House Burn Down** EXPLODING IN SOUND

The perfect eviscerating soundtrack to a psychologically crippling descent into despair and disgust, Boston's masters of indie sludge bluster, skew and bludgeon with a rare finesse. **7/10**





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# THE HARD STUFF REISSUES



## The Cult

Sonic Temple BEGGARS ARKIVE

Mammoth reissue of late-80s riff monster.



**I**an Astbury's accelerated journey through the 1980s was as strange as it was unexpected. Within the space of four years, he'd gone from being leader of Yorkshire goth-punks Southern Death Cult (supporting Bauhaus around the UK) to transatlantic hard rocker, fronting The Cult as they took on America with 1987's riff-packed *Electric* album. But the band's Stateside fixation had yet to peak. That moment arrived two years later, with the multi-platinum *Sonic Temple*.

Not only did that album mark the beginning of The Cult's long association with producer Bob Rock, it also found Billy Duffy – Astbury's songwriting partner – fully indulging his guitar god fantasies. If *Electric* was the blueprint, then *Sonic Temple* was the real deal: pared down, power-chord rock'n'roll aimed squarely at the US market.

Grooves rule. Especially the old-school kind. Inspired by Louis XIV, opener *Sun King* is macho rock incarnate as Astbury howls, Duffy pumps hard and new drummer Mickey Curry lays down a beat as simple as it is thunderous. The subject matter of lead-off single *Fire Woman* pulls straight from the rooted symbolism of rock'n'roll, as does its lyrical blues reference to Howlin' Wolf's *Smokestack Lightnin'*. This isn't the only time it happens. *Wake Up Time For Freedom* may be

Astbury's personal statement about escaping the negative demands of the record industry, but it's reliant on another sturdy old blues trope – 'Hound dog on my trail' – to make its point. Some of the lyrical conceits are clumsy (at one point, Astbury really does describe the protagonist of *Sweet Soul Sister* as a 'sexual panther'), though that doesn't make these huge songs any less impressive. The lighters-aloft moment arrives with *Edie* (*Ciao Baby*), a tribute to doomed starlet Edie Sedgwick and the Warhol demi-monde of the 60s, its grandstanding lick book-ended by soft acoustic passages.

As with *Electric*, there's little attempt to cloak *Sonic Temple*'s debt to AC/DC, the Stones and Led Zep, even down to the palpable *Kashmir* riff on *Soul Asylum*. But familiarity, rather than originality, remains its defining feature. Primed for Europe as well as America, it's still The Cult's biggest-selling album of their career.

This 30th anniversary edition comes in a variety of formats, from a five-CD set to standard double vinyl, dependent on both your budget and your appetite for demos, unreleased tracks, alternative mixes and a live recording from Wembley Stadium. It's a worthy release. All things considered, *Sonic Temple* is an event.

■■■■■■■■■

Rob Hughes

## The Electric Banana

The Complete De Wolfe Sessions GRAPEFRUIT

Pretty Things library music alter ego unzipped.



During the late 60s/early 70s, the Pretty Things enjoyed a sideline

making library music for the De Wolfe company to licence to films and TV, under the contract-swerving moniker the Electric Banana, their songs appearing in anything from soft-core comedy *What's Good For The Goose* (Pretties in club scene, Norman Wisdom cavorting with Sally Geeson) to horror classic *Dawn Of The Dead*, along with *Dr Who*, *The Sweeney* and *Minder*.

As the albums were never released, they assumed their own legend. This authorised and band-annotated three-CD set presents all five on CD for the first time (with backing tracks), offering a glimpse of the R&B wild men evolving through psych into 70s rock. 1967's *The Electric Banana* and 1968's *More Electric Banana* swing breezy Carnaby Street brass on titles like *Free Love*, frugging into freakbeat frenzy on *I Love You*. *Even More Electric Banana* ('69) psychs out on *Alexander* and *Blow Your Mind*, *Hot Licks* ('73) deploys double-tracked MC5 guitars on *Rave Up*, barroom boogie on *Good Times*, before hard rock dominates 1978's *The Return Of The Electric Banana*, including James Marshall's wah-wah-splattered Hendrix homage and metal-humping *Maze Song*.

A priceless chronicle of versatile evolution.

■■■■■■■■■

Kris Needs

## Stray Cats

Runaway Boys Deluxe Vinyl Box Set BMG

Rockabilly trio's first three albums – the Cats' cream.



Man, these cats could rock! Stray Cats exploded across our collective

consciousness in 1980 with their debut single *Runaway Boys*, a three-minute rockabilly thrill chase, equal parts energy, delinquent attitude, ostentatious tattoos and monstrous riffs. It was quickly followed by the equally mighty *Rock This Town* (one of the 500 songs that shaped rock'n'roll, according to The Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame) and the sultry feline grace of *Stray Cat Strut*.

In the years since, the stylin' trio from the Long Island town of Massapequa, NY – Brian Setzer (guitar, vocals), Lee Rocker (double bass) and drummer Slim Jim Phantom – have been true to their school, rarely deviating from the original template of stripped-back Sun Studios 'billy meets punk 'tude and a thimbleful of contemporary, across 10 or so high-octane albums.

What you have here is the cream of the crop – a deluxe vinyl edition of the band's first three albums: *Stray Cats* (1981), *Gonna Ball* (1981) and *Rant'N'Rave* (1983); lashings of sleaze, walking bass and minimal guitar solos, best shown off on the provocative US hit single (*She's*) *Sexy + 17* and tear-jerking slowie *I Won't Stand In Your Way*.

Some critics felt the Cats were a pastiche, a pallid commercial copy of the originals. In 2019 it's near impossible to tell the difference.

The four-vinyl set includes an LP of rare tracks, a 40-page booklet, and a board game where you race across South East England to have a rumble in Brighton.

■■■■■■■■■

Everett True

## Thunder

The Greatest Hits BMG

Milking their 30th-anniversary with the absolute cream.



Although the true measure of Thunder will always be their live shows

– full houses and beaming smiles a speciality, festival bills propped up, weddings and bar mitzvahs at a push – there's cast-iron proof here that they're no slouches in the studio, either. The received wisdom is that they have never been able to recreate the magic of their first album. Which is bollocks, frankly. The quality here runs deep and long. Thunder could retire (again) now and put their feet up, certain in the knowledge that they have earned themselves a place in the pantheon of classic British rock, with songs of the heft and gravitas to get them mentioned in the same breath as Bad Company, Thin Lizzy and UFO.

Over the course of *The Greatest Hits*' very strong 28-song line-up – plus a five-song Planet Rock live session from earlier this year with some formats – Thunder's legacy is



revealed as cleverly sponging up their heroes (The Who, Led Zeppelin, Humble Pie... even Alannah Myles on *In Another Life!*) before wringing out a markedly different cocktail.

There are two non-album tracks among the classics. The first is the charity single take on the Stones' *Gimme Shelter*, from 1993, the second a newly recorded cover of Led Zep's *Your Time Is Gonna Come*. It's questionable whether we really needed another compilation, but the latter track alone reminds us both of Thunder's musicality and the very special instrument that is Danny Bowes's voice. Sinatra was well past his best at 59; Bowes sounds better than ever.



Neil Jeffries

## Echo & The Bunnymen

The John Peel Sessions  
1979-83 WARNERS/RHINO

Fearless on the wireless.



Arguably more so than the majority of their contemporaries, the Bunnymen approached sessions for John Peel's seminal late-night Radio 1

show as a place to trailer works in progress, as opposed to doing quickie live versions of already familiar material. Thus, this 21-track collection carries a fair amount of historical significance, offering an insight into the laying down of foundations.

A case in point is *Taking Advantage*, which when reupholstered and renamed as *The Back Of Love* would give them their first sizeable hit and secure an invitation to appear on *Top Of The Pops*. The embryonic version here is slower in tempo and decidedly more sombre, Will Sergeant's guitars less disciplined on the screeching psych of the song's coda. Similarly, *The Killing Moon* sounds like a spectral ode to a mythic west of black-hatted cowboys, and only hints at the widescreen splendour of the now iconic commercially available recording.

What is evident throughout this collection is just how powerful and vital a unit the four-piece were from the get-go; spiky and in-synch, and possessed of a musical telepathy that still astonishes. The earlier tracks are especially impactful, the lean and hungry attitude at the heart of *Over The Wall* and

*Heaven Up Here* in particular marking them out as one of post-punk's most engagingly inventive bands.

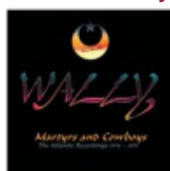


Terry Staunton

## Wally

Martyrs And Cowboys  
– The Atlantic Recordings  
1974-1975 CHERRY RED

West Coast smooth gets into bed with early-70s prog.



You have to wonder how the band could ever have thought that Wally was one out of the Good Ideas box when they needed a name. The words 'themselves' 'foot', and 'shot' spring to mind. And if it turned out that giving themselves such an unfair disadvantage did hinder their career, then that's a shame.

An at times odd but also intriguing mix of country-flecked West Coast (via home town Harrogate) soft rock and 70s prog, all that both the self-titled debut or follow-up *Valley Gardens* (packaged together here) really lack is a couple of killer songs apiece and a lead vocal with a bit more character.

While the former (produced

by Rick Wakeman and 'Whispering' Bob Harris – yes, really) mostly piles smooth multi-part vocal harmonies, acoustic guitar washes and heartbreak violin on to its gentle melodies, the latter sees the band stretching their prog legs. Opener *Valley Garden* comes out of the traps like something that wouldn't sound out of place on an early Yes album, slows the pace, then comes rattling back with echoes of Genesis. Before closer *Right By Me* heads back to California, the 19-minute, three-part *The Reason Why* sees Wally's prog flag flying even higher, David Crosby, Gram Parsons and Glenn Frey having definitely left the building.



Paul Henderson

## Humble Pie

On To Victory SEM

Onwards, but more like sideways.



In one of his many attempts to rescue a stuttering career, frontman Steve Marriott showcased a new-look Humble Pie in an American studio, with recent additions Bobby Tench

from the Jeff Beck Group and bassist Anthony Jones along with ever-dependable drummer Jerry Shirley.

The template, a fanatical desire to find the roughest R&B grail, was a constant on the Pie's ninth album, but the material began to show signs of wear. *Fool For A Pretty Face* and the apparently autobiographical *You Sippy Pratt* promised but didn't deliver, while visits to Motown (Marvin Gaye's *Baby Don't You Do It*), Otis Redding's *My Lover's Prayer* and Allen Toussaint's *Over You* (not a patch on Aaron Neville's 1960 cover) seemed slick rather than inspired, suggesting Marriott had become a willing journeyman where once he'd led the way.

Obviously by 1980 no one was expecting corny retreads of the 33-year-old's Cor Blimey/Artful Dodger persona, but there was something tragic in him now playing third fiddle to Ted Nugent and Aerosmith in anonymous American sheds. The rock world had become an unforgiving beast by this time. It's sad to hear a great British talent churning out his soul for rapidly diminishing returns.



Max Bell



## Dinosaur Jr

Reissues CHERRY RED

Four albums from one of 80s US indie's Big Three, now expanded with bonus material.

In the 1980s, three bands defined the US independent rock scene: Sonic Youth, Steve Albini's Big Black and the devastatingly loud Amherst MA three-piece Dinosaur Jr. Between them, these three groups presaged everything that was to come a few years later with the birth of grunge (at least until MTV got hold of it and turned it into suburban rock) – big, beautiful pop/rock songs, jagged punk rigour and rampant noise.

If you're telling me you don't understand the beauty and poignancy of Dinosaur Jr's first three albums, perhaps you shouldn't be listening to independent rock music at all. In their claustrophobic vocals, full-blown guitar and despairing lyrics lay the roots of a rock revolution. A description that was applied to grunge early on – "hard music played to a slow tempo" – could have been designed for Dinosaur Jr.

By the time Dino's first major-label album, *Green Mind* (7/10), arrived in 1991, the band were to all intents and purposes a J. Mascis solo vehicle. Original members Murph (drums) and

Lou Barlow (bass) had departed, and although the dynamic was sorely missed at the time, the album has aged well: full of turbulent guitar solos and heartachingly cracked vocals, best typified by the casually brilliant single *The Wagon* (about the band's old tour bus) and a bonus track, single *Whatever's Cool With Me*.

It was on their fifth album, 1993's *Where You Been* (8/10), that J really hit his groove once more. With Murph back on drums and Mike Johnson a great addition on bass, the album reached No.10 in the UK, and spawned the hit singles *Start Choppin'* and full-on aggression *Out There*.

The other two albums also contain plenty of high points; notably, 1994's *Without A Sound* (8/10) had several songs later used in videogame and YouTube clips (see the gorgeous billowing guitar solo on *Over Your Shoulder*). Mike Johnson aside, this is a J solo record, with many songs reflecting J's sense of bereavement

following the death of his father. The mostly solo *Hand It Over* (1997, 7/10) is a fittingly engaging swansong.

All albums come reissued on double gatefold coloured vinyl and deluxe two-CD expanded editions, with bewildering arrays of wonderful bonus tracks.

Everett True







## The Wildhearts

**Earth Vs The Wildhearts** RHINO

The greatest British debut album of the past 30 years gets a vinyl reissue.



All these years on, it's hard to imagine the impact The Wildhearts had on music when they emerged at the start of the 1990s, which was precisely zilch. Back then nobody knew quite what to make of this amalgam of rejects, troublemakers and malcontents from such long forgotten cannon fodder as the Tattooed Love Boys and Energetic Krusher. Fair enough, mainman Ginger had once been fourth banana in the Quireboys, but that's hardly the stuff that legends are made of.

The Wildhearts were part of a Doomed Generation of brilliant, unpigeonholable British bands who promised much but ultimately failed to deliver: The Atom Seed, New England, Loud – too smart, clever and sexy and just not American enough to succeed in those unenlightened post-hair metal, pre-grunge times. All had had moments of greatness, but none had so much brilliance to burn as The Wildhearts.

There had been early warning shots – the *Mondo Akimbo A-Go-Go* and *Don't Be Happy... Just Worry* EPs were a glorious boom-crash opening salvo in 1992. But it would be a year later, with the release of *Earth Vs The Wildhearts*, that the flag of genius was fully unfurled.

More than a quarter of a century on, it

still sounds like nothing else. Or rather it sounds like everything else, jammed together in the Magimix blender that was Ginger's mind: Metallica, Cheap Trick, The Replacements, The Beatles, The Cardiacs. It's an album that wears its own musical schizophrenia like a crown, from the thrash-pop paranoia of *Greetings From Shitsville* to the heads-down Beach Boys/Sex Pistols mash-up of *My Baby Is A Head Fuck*. At the centre of the madness is Ginger himself, not so much deranged ringmaster as barely-in-control lion-tamer, trying to get the sounds in his head to do what he wanted them to do while armed with nothing more than a whip and a wooden chair, and sometimes even succeeding.

The chattering classes would have it that Oasis' *Definitely Maybe* is the best British debut album of the last 30 years. They'd be wrong: this is. Whether you need this vanilla vinyl reissue – no extra tracks, certainly nothing you've not heard before – is between you, your conscience and your wallet. But as a work of deranged genius that the rest of the universe has never come close to catching up with, *Earth Vs The Wildhearts* is untouchable.



Dave Everley

## The Replacements

**Dead Man's Pop** WARNERS/RHINO

A key album overhauled, plus 49 bonus cuts.



When it first appeared in 1989, The Replacements' *Don't Tell A Soul* was designed to be the album that elevated them from respected cult status and on towards mainstream adulation. The slick and shiny production helped single *I'll Be You* into the *Billboard* Hot 100 for the first (and, as it transpired, last) time in the band's career, but the parent disc under-performed and its makers soon fell out of love with it themselves.

The chief purpose of this box set is seemingly to return the record's 11 tracks to a more earthy, stripped down sound – with producer Matt Wallace reinstating all the rough edges that had been sacrificed in pursuit of pop success – but it offers more than that. Certainly, the likes of *Anywhere's Better Than Here* benefit from the make-under, more in the spirit of the group's trademark dishevelled devilment, although the biggest draw is the plethora of out-takes and demos.

Tom Waits moseys into view for a handful of numbers, including a joyous trudge through Billy Swan's country hit *I Can Help*, while a 15-song live set (during which they ferociously attack The Only Ones' *Another Girl, Another Planet*) shows The Replacements at their ramshackle, off-kilter power pop best.



Terry Staunton

## Beautiful Freaks

**Waving Our Flag High, Wave On, Wave On: Music From The Original Counter Culture** TAD

Frying tonight: alternative "cosmic mash-up".



From the firm behind *Running The Voodoo Down* comes a 60s counter-culture compilation that swerves psych's rock-and-pop warhorses to collage "a journey into sound" using spoken word, bongo ragas, acid-rock, field recordings and period curios; contextualised by compiler Tony Harlow's notes emphasising the era's LSD domination and uncanny forerunning of punk.

After Allen Ginsberg's *Footnote To Howl*, the Grateful

Dead exhale *That's It For The Other One*, the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band unfurl the unsettling *Music For The Head Ballet* and Third Ear Band's *Earth* invokes a Druid barn-dance. Obscure weirdness by jazz-psych folkie Brigitte Fontaine presages a spaced stretch of prime teapot Gong, acid-jamming Hapshash and the Coloured Coat (with Guy Stevens), Hawkwind's hippie-twee *Be Yourself*, Yoko Ono's ear-lacerating *Why* and zonked Aussies Captain Matchbox and the Whoopee Band.

This feast of joyfully fried celebration fittingly closes with Timothy Leary pontificating before the Fugs exorcise the Pentagon in October '67. Forget airbrushed boxsets, this was how the 60s counterculture actually *sounded* and felt.



Kris Needs

## Jeff Buckley

**Live At Wetlands, New York, NY 8/16/94**

**Live From Seattle, WA, May 7, 1995**

**Cabaret Metro, Chicago, IL, May 13, 1995**

**Live At Columbia Records Radio Hour, June 4, 1995**

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

Anniversary of Grace liberates flood of live recordings.




25 years since *Grace*, the doors to the late Jeff Buckley's vaults are thrown

open, with the blessings of his mother/estate. At least digitally. As well as extended reissues of his studio work, these four concert albums

(contemporaneous to *Grace*), debut online. What hits you hardest is that voice, in all its unearthly beauty, sometimes anguished, sometimes joyous. There's also the unpredictability of his music; even after a quarter-century's familiarity, one is never certain whether the next twist in the road is going to opt for increasing aggression or subdued tenderness. Rarely has such a consummate, proficient musician chosen to leap so frequently from filigreed to feral.

Wetlands captures the buzz in Tribeca a week before *Grace* emerged; the Seattle show sees him deep-diving into his Nina Simone obsession. Yet he was as into Rush as Edith Piaf, and in Chicago he's rocking, interpreting *Kick Out The Jams* and Big Star's *Kangaroo*, while the band show at Columbia swoops into The Smiths' *I Know*




*It's Over*. If (probably a big 'if') this is his last goodbye, it harbours hallelujahs galore. All    
Chris Roberts

**One Way System**  
1981-1984 CHERRY RED/CAPTAIN OII

Underrated UK82 punks hold up well.



The Rebellion festival has turned Blackpool into a punk Mecca, but the genre's history there goes back further. One Way System, from nearby Fleetwood, hit their stride in time to play the Up Yer Tower punk festival in 1982, and are considered part of that year's UK82 subgenre. They may not have redefined punk, but they certainly interpreted it with enough passion and imagination to fill two indie-charting albums and a raft of singles with material that strikes a stirring balance between barbed wire aggression and memorable riffs and choruses. *All Systems Go's* (1983) breakneck opener *Ain't No Answers* sits comfortably with more measured tracks displaying hints of street punk (*Jerusalem*) and US hardcore

(*Gutter Boy*). *Writing On The Wall* (1984) adds sharper arrangements, alongside ear-shearing blasts. *Rarities 1981-84* compiles non-album singles (including *Stab The Judge*) and strong unreleased demo tracks. 

Rich Davenport

**The Trashmen**  
*Surfin' Bird: The Best Of The Trashmen* CHARLY

Bird is the word.



It may offend purists but the deranged, arm-flapping loony-babble of the Trashmen's *Surfin' Bird* is one of rock'n'roll's immortal classics. Derived from the Rivingtons' *Papa Oom Mow Mow*, its gurgling onslaught peaked in 1963's surfing craze, dive-bombing US charts – even if it was initially ignored in the UK.

The Minneapolis quartet struggled to follow with demented variations *Bird Dance Beat* and *Bad News*, but February 1964's LP of surf/beat chestnuts, including *Misirlou*, *Kuk* and *Money (That's What I Want)*, along with hot rod tear-up *A-Bone* and effects-laden *Tube City*, is a minor garage-rock gem.

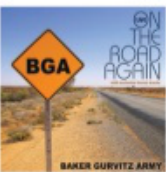
Subsequent years have seen *Surfin' Bird's* flight path continue with covers by the Ramones, Cramps and many more, in movies including *Pink Flamingoes* and *Full Metal Jacket*, goosing the UK Top Five in 2010 after Peter Griffin's explosive obsession on *Family Guy*. Now reissued on wax, the bird flies again. 

Kris Needs

**Baker Gurvitz Army**  
*On the Road Again (Live)*


THE STORE FOR MUSIC

Ginger goes back to work.



The Gurvitz brothers were post-Cream power trio veterans when they asked Ginger Baker to join their band during a 1974 Speakeasy booze-up, as if he was still some jobbing Soho drummer looking for a gig. Out of options as his new start in Nigeria collapsed, Ginger's conventional rock career gave its last gasp with the Baker Gurvitz Army, a second-division Cream whose sole year of touring resulted in *Live In Derby '75*, and this already partially bootlegged London show.

Peter Lerner's inventive synth work and JB's-style guitar on *The Hustler* are among the signs that this is '75, not '68. Ginger's rapidly tumbling bass-drum and bad poetry on *Time* show he's reasonably engaged, amidst general heaviness and extensive solos leavened by the baroque, 60s-style *The Artist*, and *Space Machine's* glam swagger. Extras include a rollicking if sloppy *Sunshine Of Your Love*, tactfully dedicated by Ginger to "Jim Hendrix", who "unfortunately can't be here, because he's not alive anymore".

Little seems that urgent in this professional but aimless album, which irresistibly recalls why punk happened. 

Nick Hasted

**Stereolab**  
*Emperor Tomato Ketchup, Dots & Loops, Cobra And Phases Group Play Voltage In The Milky Night* WARP

Reissues of three late 90s albums with bonus tracks.



During the 90s, Stereolab were the brilliant antithesis to Britpop and the retrograde union flag colours

that ran through it like a stick of rock. Led by Tim Gane and Laetitia Sadier, they were essentially a Franco-German alliance, referencing the motorik beat of Neu!, the fuzzy logic of Faust and specifically Kraftwerk on *OLV 26*. Meanwhile, Sadier's vocals and lyrics were a heady mix of perfumed, Bardot-style French pop and political sloganeering. Overall, they rippled with nostalgia for a pop future that might have been had it stuck to its radical, perfectly plotted, innocent ideals.

These three albums, released in 1996, 1997 and 1999 respectively are a reminder of Stereolab's range and versatility; from the tropicalia of *Dots & Loops' Rainbo Conversation* to the free jazz of imaginary soundtracking of *Fuses* (on *Cobra...*) to the lengthy, linear eventful trans-Europe excursion of *Blue Milk* on the same album. There are countless bonus demos included, generally acoustic sketches; they remind us, as with *Cybele's Reverie*, that even minus their lashings of instrumentation, these songs breathe with intimacy and life way beyond mere pastiche. All 

David Stubbs



**Slade**  
*Feel The Noize: The Singlez Box!* BMG

Vinyl compendium of glam-era goodness from one of the most lovable bands in rock.

Has there ever been a more lovable band than Slade? Just when the music industry started to take itself too seriously in the early 70s, along they came in their daft gear, thigh boots and mad sideburns, barking out footstomping anthems that reminded everyone that pop was always meant to be fun. Yes, they made some great albums. But Slade were essentially a killer singles band, skittling their way to the top of the charts with unerring regularity.


This handsomely packaged set features ten of their most popular European singles on seven-inch format, housed in replicas of the original artwork. Nice to look at, certainly, but this is more than mere tactile nostalgia. Taken in sequence, the unflagging intensity and sheer exuberance of these hit 45s still have the power to thrill. 1971's Marc Bolan-ish *Coz I Luv You* was Slade's big breakthrough, written in half an hour by Noddy Holder and Jim Lea, who later dismissed it as "namby-pamby".

It's the sound of a band inching towards a formula, though it also feels a little like an urban

folk shanty, a sense heightened by Lea's violin. By the following year's riffy *Take Me Bak 'Ome* they'd nearly cracked it, borrowing bits from The Beatles' *Everybody's Got Something To Hide Except Me And My Monkey* without anyone kicking up a fuss.

It wasn't until *Mama Weer All Crazee Now* that they truly patented the Slade sound – terrace chants, Noddy's throat-tearing vocals and full glam-slam rampage. 1973's pounding *Cum On Feel The Noize* (the first single to dash straight to No.1 since The Beatles' *Get Back*), cemented their status as the most popular group in Britain. Indeed, Slade's extended run of consecutive Top 20 hits – among them six chart-toppers – made them the most successful homegrown band of the decade. *My Friend Stan* proved they were capable of something different, slowing the pace and honing a very fine piano ballad. It's eclipsed here, however, by the homesick blues of the frankly brilliant *Far Far*



Away, pulled from the soundtrack of 1975's *Slade In Flame*. The tenth single on offer is *Night Starvation*, an unremarkable promo item from 1980's *Six Of The Best* EP. The B-side, crowd favourite *When I'm Dancin' I Ain't Fightin'* is a much surer bet. 

Rob Hughes





# New Model Army

Mocked by most of the UK press, the Bradford band have remained as steadfastly uncompromising as they have unfashionable.

New Model Army were once introduced on 80s TV show *The Tube* as “the ugliest band in the world”. It wasn’t meant as a compliment, although host Jools Holland had a point – with his broken teeth, scowl and general air of aggro, singer Justin Sullivan wasn’t going to win any beauty pageants.

Still, the description suited the trio. Based in unfashionable Bradford, New Model Army were the polar opposite of everything the yuppie-fied 80s had to offer – they were clog-wearing, dole-queue refugees, more likely to be found on CND marches or playing free festivals than sipping champagne and knocking back oysters in a trendy London restaurant.

Their sound was certainly primitive and direct, defined as much by the huge bass of original four-stringer Stuart Morrow as it was rock’s traditional guitar bluster. Sullivan called himself Slade The Leveller, partly in homage to a group of 13th-century Cornish insurgents, and NMA didn’t write songs so much as broadsides, taking aim at everything from Margaret Thatcher’s government to the claustrophobic mentality that turned provincial towns of Britain into battlegrounds.

They were once refused work permits by the US authorities, who said their music had “no artistic merit” – a view largely shared by the UK press, who mocked them as musical Luddites. Their fans begged to differ – the devotion NMA inspired among their followers was impressive even by the standards of the pre-internet 80s.

They’ve never shaken off that ‘Luddite’ tag, even though it misses the depth in their music. Sullivan may be a malcontent, but 1989 anthem *Green And Grey* is as powerful a song about wanting to escape a small town as anything Springsteen has written. Sullivan’s upbringing as a Quaker informs his work, his stridency camouflaging doubt at every turn.

Today, the singer remains the sole remaining original member of New Model Army. The band has had its share of tribulations, from the departure and death of longtime drummer Robert Heaton to the fire that destroyed the band’s studio in 2001, though they’ve continued unabated.

A few years ago, Sullivan was asked if he thought his band were a national treasure. “I’d rather be a national disgrace,” he snarled back. On that front, New Model Army continues to do an admirable job.

Dave Everley

## Essential Classics



### The Ghost Of Cain

EMI, 1986

All the pieces were in place by the time of NMA’s second full-length album. Building on the foundations laid down by its predecessor, *No Rest For The Wicked*, the only thing that thunders louder than Justin Sullivan’s righteous conviction is the chiming bass that defined the band’s sound in their early years.

Fan favourite *51st State* adds a scalpel-sharp folk-punk edge as it takes aim at the ‘special relationship’ between Thatcher-era Britain and Reagan-era USA, while *Lovesongs*’ mix of romance and regret shoots down the misguided notion that NMA were little more than clog-footed proto-crusties.



### Thunder And Consolation

EMI, 1989

New Model Army’s masterpiece: the perfect collision of folk, punk and straight-down-the-line rock.

The presence of legendary producer Tom Dowd was an indication of the band’s intent to push themselves out of the pigeonhole they’d been stuffed into, an ambition that manifests in the breadth of Rob Heaton and Justin Sullivan’s songwriting.

It contains two stone-cold NMA classics in *Vagabonds* and *Green And Grey*, both given extra depth by Ed Alleyne-Johnson’s evocative violin. Elsewhere the propulsive 225 crackles with kinetic energy.

As perfect an album as they’ve made.



## Superior Reputation cementing



### Vengeance

ABSTRACT, 1984

'I believe in justice, I believe in vengeance, I believe in getting the bastard,' Sullivan spat on the raging title track of the band's debut mini-album, a clarion call that marked out the band as unrepentant rabble-rousers.

In fairness, it wasn't wide of the mark. The original release's eight tracks seethed. *Small Town England* and *Spirit Of The Falklands* reflected the frustrations of the dole queue generation. Even the comparatively restrained *A Liberal Education* could barely hide its anger.

They made better albums, certainly more refined ones, but it's impossible to argue with the impact of *Vengeance*.



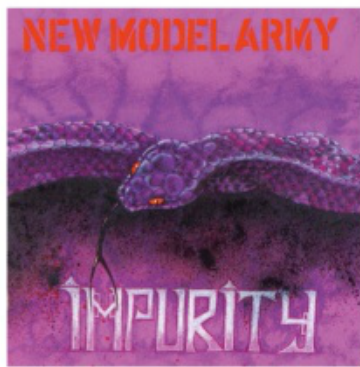
### No Rest For The Wicked

EMI, 1985

NMA came under fire from punk's agit-prop wing for signing to EMI – a company with links to the arms trade – for their first full-length album.

But having the bigger platform seemed only to focus their ire. Sullivan took aim at xenophobia (*My Country*) and toxic small-town masculinity (*Better Than Them*), while the furious title track remains one of their greatest anthems.

But *Young, Gifted And Skint* possessed an underdog empathy that evoked no one so unlikely as Bruce Springsteen, in spirit if not in sound – a side of the band that remains intact today.

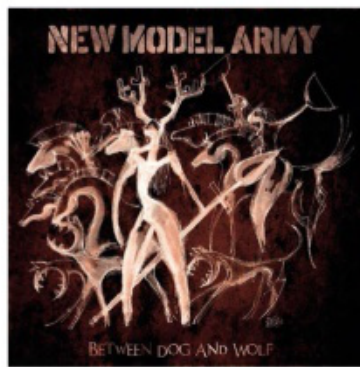


### Impurity

EMI, 1990

Their first album of the decade introduced different shades to NMA's palette. The old thunder was present on *Get Me Out*, but the synth that colours *The Space* adds an expansive element to their sound, *Before I Get Old* is one of their most atmospheric songs, and *Marrakesh* is among their loveliest, and saddest.

That melancholy streak extends to *11 Years*, whose backwards-tracked drums couldn't mask the sadness at the passing of time shot through it. It came along during a run of albums that threatened to take them to the next level, but the mainstream proved resistant to them. Probably for the best.



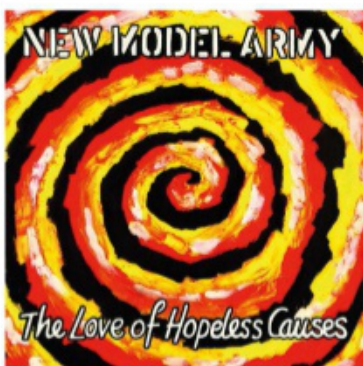
### Between Dog And Wolf

ATTACK ATTACK, 2013

NMA undeniably made their best – and most popular – albums in the 80s and early 90s. But the new millennium seemed to usher in a creative slump.

After a run of holding-pattern albums in the noughties, they rediscovered their fire with *Between Dog And Wolf*. According to Sullivan, this was partly down to new bassist Ceri Monger, who injected some youthful enthusiasm into the band. But it's down to the songs too – simultaneously expansive and intimate, this is the sound of a band redrawing their own boundaries after 30 years.

## Good Worth exploring



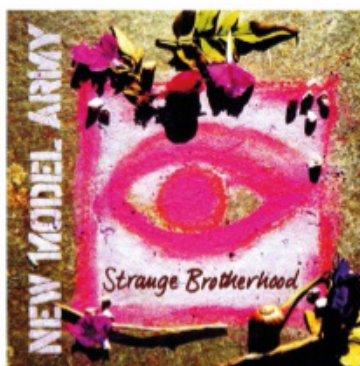
### The Love Of Hopeless Causes

EMI, 1993

The closest NMA have ever come to a proper mainstream rock album: 10 muscular songs that shine with studio polish.

Of course, NMA's idea of 'mainstream' is a world away from anyone else's – lead single *Here Comes The War* was a semi-spoken word broadside aimed at the industrial-military complex, inspired in part by the first Gulf War, while *My People* takes a sideways look at populist politics, something that is even more relevant today.

But the high point is Top 30 hit *Living In The Rose*, a hazy, uneasy love song that attempts to find joy in a vast and uncaring universe – and succeeds.



### Strange Brotherhood

ATTACK ATTACK, 1998

The mid-90s were turbulent for NMA. They split from EMI and tensions grew between Justin Sullivan and Robert Heaton. No one would have been surprised if they thought the world had moved on without them.

Their response was typical NMA: dig their heels in and do what they'd always done. The result was an album that sparks with moments of backs-against-the-wall brilliance, encapsulated in *Wonderful Way To Go*'s rush of death-or-glory euphoria.

This would be Heaton's last album with the band. He left soon afterwards after being diagnosed with a brain tumour and sadly died five years later.



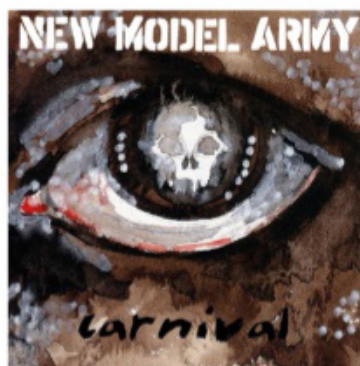
### Winter

ATTACK ATTACK, 2016

The welcome resurgence that began with *Between Dog And Wolf* continued with this follow-up three years later. But where its predecessor was exhilarating and open, *Winter* bristled with a darker, more enigmatic energy.

The fury and poetry was still there, but it was tempered by the wisdom of experience – opening track *Beginning* built its tension over seven perfectly crafted minutes. That's not to say they couldn't let loose when the urge took them – *Burn The Castle* was an old-school call to arms that echoed the unvarnished rants of the 80s. Happily, the late-career hot streak has continued with this year's equally convincing *From Here*.

## Avoid



### Carnival

ATTACK ATTACK, 2005

There's no such thing as a bad NMA album, but there are some humdrum ones from the 00s. Chief among them is *Carnival*.

Opener *Water* promises a ride full of surprises that the album fails to deliver on. There's little wrong with *Prayer Flags*, *BD3* and *LS43*, but there's little memorable about them either – this is NMA by numbers, the sound of a band searching for an identity after the upheaval of the late 90s.

Even here, two songs stand out. The brooding tribal rhythms of *Red Earth* are simultaneously weird and desolate, while closing track *Fireworks Night* is Sullivan's pent-up meditation on friendship and loss, inspired by the death of ex-bandmate Rob Heaton.

## Essential Playlist

### Vengeance

Vengeance

### No Rest

No Rest For The Wicked

### Better Than Them

No Rest For The Wicked

### 51st State

The Ghost Of Cain

### Lovesongs

The Ghost Of Cain

### 225

Thunder And Consolation

### Green And Grey

Thunder And Consolation

### The Hunt

B-side

### Get Me Out

Impurity

### Eleven Years

Impurity

### Here Comes The War

The Love Of Hopeless Causes

### Living In The Rose

The Love Of Hopeless Causes

### Wonderful Way To Go

Strange Brotherhood

### You Weren't There

Eight

### Fireworks Night

Carnival

### Today Is A Good Day

Today Is A Good Day

### Horsemen

Between Dog And Wolf

### Beginning

Winter

### Never Arriving

From Here



Tim Mohr

**BURNING DOWN THE HAUS**

Punk Rock, Revolution and the Fall of the Berlin Wall

In the 1970s, krautrock sought to shun all Anglo-American influences and create a musical identity of its own, West German in origin. In East Germany, things were different. There, the imperative was to shun the blandness of state-approved bands and take inspiration from the radical West. In the late 70s, this meant punk.

The more they attempted to repress the movement, the more it flourished,

David Stubbs

**ELTON JOHN**

ROCK & ROLL

Facts and figures on every Elton album are accompanied by fresh perspectives on records which have stood the test of time, which were perhaps unfairly dismissed upon release, and how they either helped or hindered the momentum of an

EAGLE VISION

With all the hoopla surrounding Guns N' Roses' Not In This Lifetime tour, Slash's partnership with Myles Kennedy risks becoming a sideshow. As this set from the Eventim Apollo reminds us, that would be a great injustice. With four solo albums to mine, the guitarist has



strength in depth: *The Call Of The Wild* and *Halo* are cattle prods for a crowd who hardly need encouragement, and the quality flows through a louche *Back From Cali*, a weighty *By The Sword* and a spiky *Anastasia*, the latter capped with a warp-speed solo the great man could never have pulled off back in the day.

As for Kennedy, while he's inevitably a safer prospect than Axl Rose – his patter is largely limited to requests to “see those hands”, and there's never any danger he's about to swan-dive into the audience to confiscate a camera – it's difficult to imagine a frontman who could sing these songs better.



Henry Yates

Various Jigsaws

Various Artists ZEE PRODUCTIONS

Priest, Maiden and Metallica sleeves are turned into puzzles.



With so many of rock's founding fathers having reached a certain age, a range of jigsaws based on classic rock and metal album covers makes sense. Face it: slotting together random shapes is more becoming than a night on the Jack Daniel's and nose ningle at that time of life.

Zee Productions have turned classic album covers by Metallica, Iron Maiden, Slayer, Motörhead and Judas Priest into 500-piece puzzles. *Classic Rock* tackled the latter's *Painkiller* sleeve, and it is, to use official jigsaw terminology, an utter bastard. What you'd think would be a doddle proves to be more painful than sitting through a Lars Ulrich drum solo.

Eight hours and 47 minutes later, it's finally done. Has it been satisfying? Yes. Has it been fun? Sort of. Are jigsaws the new rock'n'roll? No, but your liver might thank you for the break.



Dave Everley

The Cambridge Companion To The Rolling Stones

Edited by Victor Coelho and John Covach

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Desiccating their satanic majesties' bequest.

Described as “the first major academic study of the Rolling Stones”, this dry compendium of essays is an intriguing prospect for serious Stones fans (i.e. those who've bought all the authorised product and locatable bootlegs,

read all the books, yet still find the minutiae of the band's career infinitely more compelling than anything their wives and families might be getting up to).

While some contributions inform and sparkle (Bill Janovitz's *Guitar Slingers* and *Hired Guns*), others rip the guts out of their subject. Coelho and Covach themselves routinely over-analyse the joy and immediacy out of some of the most visceral recordings ever made; trawling through the latter's introductory piece on the Stones' '63-74 albums and singles (basically a list bulked out as frill-free prose) only feels like an act of self-harm. With painful predictability, the last 40 RS years are addressed as an afterthought, and UK punk's defined by a Canadian roots rocker with a PhD, Lester Bangs's tired old subjectivity and a Simon Frith on his bookshelf.

Where's David Dalton when you need him?



Ian Fortnam

Debbie Harry & Blondie: Picture This

Mick Rock PALAZZO

Capturing “the greatest blonde that ever rocked”.



Self-described “glam-rock shutterbug” Mick Rock was renowned for his photos of Bowie, Reed and Iggy when he relocated to New York in 1978 and was commissioned to shoot Debbie Harry. Starting in 1974, Rock had shot Blondie live before, but his '78-79 studio sessions count among the most evocatively fabulous shots of rock's most photographed goddess and her “sexy blend of New York downtown pop princess and Marilyn”.

Accompanying mostly previously unseen images, Rock's vividly entertaining narrative mixes detailing his riotous New York antics with sessions that also occurred at Harry and Chris Stein's apartment – the band then looking like “a squad of cute hit-men”, concluding by showing that sparks still flew at reunion Debbie sessions in 2000 and '03.

With a foreword from the lady, this relentlessly stunning treasure trove ranks with Stein's work as the tome that proves Rock's assertion that “Harry changed the face of popular music forever”.



Kris Needs

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**CLASSIC**  
**ROCK**





# LIVE!

## THE HIGH-VOLTAGE WHAT'S ON GUIDE

EDITED BY IAN FORTNAM (REVIEWS) AND DAVE LING (TOURS)

### P **113** **Prophets Of Rage**

Rap and rock unite and produce  
something quite magnificent.

P **104** **INTERVIEWS**

P **107** **TOUR DATES**

P **110** **LIVE REVIEWS**





# LIVE!



|||||  
“I’m a bit worried that we might have a hit on our hands. It’s got a jangling, Byrds-ian vibe. It’s real ear worm stuff.”

## Hawklords

The Hawkwind spin-off celebrate 50 years of British space-rock with nine shows.

Formed during a period of down time from Hawkwind, the Hawklords made one album and played one tour, but then faded away when Dave Brock and Robert Calvert returned to the mothership. Since 2008, when bassist-turned-keyboard player Harvey Bainbridge reactivated the name, the revived Hawklords have made seven further albums and toured like maniacs. Guitarist/singer Jerry Richards reveals why Nik Turner is on board for next month’s UK tour.

**The positive response to last year’s album *Brave New World* prompted *Classic Rock* to ask: “Why on earth don’t these indomitable psychedelic warlords get a lot more credit?” Is there an easy answer to that question?**

We are very much a DIY band, and Daavid Allen [late Gong frontman] once told me: “It’s all about cycles.” He talked about the interconnectedness of everything, how things will take you for a ride until a new flavour of the month comes along. It’s the natural order of things.

**You’re playing just sixteen dates on this tour, which is short by Hawklords standards.**

Yeah. Like most of our band I come from the free-festival scene, so we take those sensibilities of playing anywhere, anytime with us wherever we go.

**Hawkwind will also be on tour later this year.** Dave Brock is celebrating fifty years of Hawkwind,

and rightly so. I’d like to stress that I don’t have a problem with Dave, who is one of the greatest ever British vocalists. But in my view he should be having a lot of guest stars up there with him.

**That doesn’t sound very likely.**

No. So the Hawklords are celebrating fifty years of British space rock, and we’re taking Nik Turner [Hawkwind co-founder] on tour with us.

**Will Turner participate on the entire tour?**

He’s looking forward to being part of the whole thing, yeah. Right now Nik’s busy writing the lyrics for a song that we’d like to go onto the album we’re wrapping up. We want Nik on this one.

**Six and its successor *Brave New World* dealt with the themes of war and peace. *Heaven’s Gate* will close that trilogy by addressing love.**

It draws together the many musical strands to influence the band members over five decades. We call it ‘Powerful, thought-provoking meditations on perhaps the most endearing of human qualities: love, itself.’ Yeah, bloody hippies.

**What does it sound like?**

I’m a bit worried that we might have a hit on our hands. It’s quite different for us. It’s got psychedelic pop – a jangling, Byrds-ian, San Franciscan-sounding vibe, and a tune that celebrates The Kinks, The Beatles and the Floyd. It’s real ear worm stuff.

**Tell us about the mix of Hawklords and Hawkwind songs in the set?**

A couple of Nik’s songs – *Brainstorm* and *Master Of The Universe* – will be played. The Hawklords don’t really do Hawkwind covers, but I’m still absolutely fascinated with Bob Calvert [who co-wrote most of the first Hawklords album. He died in 1988]. Bob’s wordplay was brilliant. We do some stuff that he wrote.

**What about the Hawklords’ relationship with Hawkwind? Is there even such a thing?**

Dave Brock might not agree with this, but I believe our activity has helped them. Christ almighty, not that they needed that. But we still play private parties and free festivals that were so fundamental to the original Hawkwind ethos.

**Should a fragile peace exist, the presence on this tour of Brock’s personal Darth Vader, Nik Turner, might change all of that?**

Oh, they’re two sides of the same coin – just a pair of old warhorses. We don’t get involved in any of [the bad blood], it has nothing to do with the music. We’re just trying to spread the word. **DL**

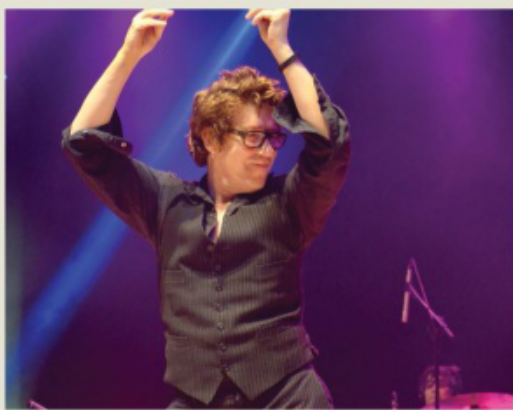
*The tour begins in Jfitchin on October 17.*



### ‘LORDING IT UP

★ *Heaven’s Gate* is due for release on Oct 18.  
★ The ‘Lords also appear at Hard Rock Hell Prog in London and Sheffield.  
★ Dave ‘Lighthouse’ Johnson provides visual projections and ‘mind manifestations’.





## Psychedelic Furs

The British post-punk band limber up for nine shows.

**B**est known for the tracks *Love My Way* and the title track from the 1986 film *Pretty In Pink*, the Furs went on hiatus in the early 90s and regrouped in 2000. Ahead of a UK tour, we caught up with bassist Tim Butler.

**Last year the Furs appeared in London at the Meltdown Festival, curated by The Cure's Robert Smith. How was that?**

Fantastic. Usually our tours are two years apart in England, but to play a venue like the Royal Festival Hall we were surprised and even elated by the reaction that we got.

**Did you hang out with Robert Smith?**

No. He was sick that night. We had hoped he might introduce us but he didn't show up, which was a shame.

**Appearing at cultural events like Meltdown, and having begun in the underground, does the gushing validation of establishment journals such as *The Times* and *The Guardian* feel slightly strange?**

Maybe it does a little, but those articles are written by respected journalists that started out as fans. If they're in their sixties now, then who cares? I will love punk music no matter how old I am.

**What can you tell us about the concerts you have planned?**

Well, we're working on a new album that's due out next year, so we might preview new tracks alongside the hits. We've been playing a new song [*The Boy That Invented Rock & Roll*] and it's been going down really well.

**Your last album, *World Outside*, is now 28 years old. Why a new one now?**

We've wanted to do it since we got back together [in 2000]. We still feel like we've got something to say, but we didn't want to feel under pressure to write another *Pretty In Pink* or *Love My Way*. And it feels like the right time.

**Was it a bit like a damn bursting?**

Yeah, a little. And everybody in the band contributed songs, which made for a really healthy process, unlike when it was pretty much down to John [Ashton, former guitarist], my brother Richard [vocals] and myself. In fact we've enough songs left over for another album and we're already thinking about that. That'll surprise a few people, won't it? **DL**

*The tour begins on October 1.*



## Walter Trout

The New Jersey-born blues-rock guitarist plays nine more UK gigs.

**H**aving cheated the Grim Reaper a few years ago, the musician who many never expected to see on a stage again is back where he belongs.

**You appeared at the Rockin' The Blues event with Jonny Lang and Kris Barras at London's Forum back in June. Was that fun?**

Jonny and Kris are stunning performers and great guys, so it was an amazing night of an equally enjoyable tour. I had played the Forum rip-roaring drunk with John Mayall when it was called the Town & Country Club, so it was good to return older, wiser and sober.

**A liver transplant saved your life, but there were post-op complications. How are you feeling now.**

Since the transplant I'm feeling better, younger and fuller of energy than in many years – even at the age of sixty-eight. I have more confidence and inspiration when I play.

**The title of your new album, *Survivor Blues*, says it all.**

My beloved wife, Marie, reminded me that its miraculous I'm still here. The guys in my band are in recovery from drug addiction, and one of them recently had a double bypass surgery, so her suggestion seemed very appropriate.

**Out on the road you must meet fans who helped raise the \$245,000 that contributed towards your healthcare. How do those conversations pan out?**

One of my greatest joys is going

**“I owe it to the fans to play like it's the last gig I'll ever do.”**

out to the merch booth. I'm glad I can do that. I still love meeting my fans. When I meet those people the first thing I do is thank them profusely. I've broken down and wept in their arms. They bought stock in my liver, and I owe it to them to play like it's the last gig I'll ever do.

**You've played a part in the mentoring of newcomers such as Marcus King, Laurence Jones, Danny Bryant, Mitch Laddie and Oli Brown. Can that sometimes involve tough love?**

Once in a while, but mainly I try to be supportive. How you choose to phrase criticism is very important; it's got to be kept positive.

**But such responsibility must be satisfying?**

Oh, I love doing it. It's up to those names you just mentioned to keep things going in the face of Jay Z, Kanye West and Cardi fuckin' B, so it's very important that they do so. They're carrying the torch.

**What's the piece of advice that you most often give?**

I impress upon them to be themselves and also to understand that they will encounter a lot of vultures and leeches along the way. It's not about the fame, it's about how badly they want to be an artist. **DL**

*The last of the nine dates is in Sheffield on October 12.*





# LIVE!



## Anathema

The Liverpool band are counting down to lift-off at Space Rocks.

**F**rontman/guitarist Vincent Cavanagh looks forward to boldly going where the band have never gone before.

**Prog magazine's review of your Ramblin' Man Fair set pondered upon whether Anathema sound like Pink Floyd and the Prodigy locked together in the same room, or what Kraftwerk might be in the guise of a rock band?**

Those are really good questions – and the implications are very flattering. I'm sure that Kraftwerk would be horrified to hear them, though [laughs].

**The review summed up: "The less Anathema rock, the more interesting they are."**

We played a couple of festivals recently, which meant revisiting our songs from the past. Playing the older stuff isn't something we dislike in the least, but an artist should keep moving forwards. Bowie once said that making music is like wading out into deep water. When your feet can't touch the ground you're in the most productive place.

**At Space Rocks the band will be collaborating with visual**

**artist Kristina Pulejkova and the European Space Agency's video archives to create a unique 90-minute visual presentation which explores parallels that intersect between humanity, life on earth and space exploration.**

We jumped at the chance to be a part of Space Rocks. Kristina Pulejkova's work is incredible, and the chance of collaborating with her on a bespoke visual performance is really exciting. It may well rub off on how we present our own shows in the future, because we want to make them more visually interesting.

**"I was frustrated that not many astronauts came from Anfield."**

**Have you always been interested in space travel?**

Yeah, from a very early age I had books about the solar system and space exploration. But I remember being very frustrated upon realising that not many astronauts came from Anfield. And then I got into music and everything changed.

**What do you say to the conspiracists who believe that the Apollo 11 Moon landings were faked, that the footage was shot on a film set?**

[Dismissively] It's like those that tell us the earth is flat. Some people would rather believe such negative, insulting rubbish. It's one of those awful consequences of the internet. It used to be one odd old bloke in a pub with some funny ideas, but mass communication has allowed these people to become organised. It would be harder to fake than to actually make it happen.

**If you could be an intergalactic film or TV personality – for example Mister Spock, Captain Kirk, Buzz Lightyear – for the day, who would you choose, and why?**

[Laughing] What a fantastic question. I'd like to be Doctor Dave Bowman, the guy from the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* [1968] that goes into the monolith. Wouldn't it be great to visit another dimension? **DL**

*Space Rocks takes place at Indigo at the O2 in London on September 21.*



## Anti-Nowhere League

"Still out of control," they play dates from Sept to Feb.

**N**otorious for the profanity-riddled *So What?*, later covered by Metallica, the Anti-Nowhere League still live in Tunbridge Wells and are still "out of control". We caught up with singer Animal.

**Back in the 1980s, copies of *So What?* were seized under the Obscene Publications Act. Was it always important for the ANL to cause shock?**

At the start it was because we were completely talentless. Walking around shouting and swearing, we loved pissing people off. All the other bands wanted to make money and have careers; our viewpoint was: We've got the drugs and the women – fuck everybody else. But down the years the music overtook all of that.

**In the new DVD *We Are The League*, Rat Scabies claims that The Damned went unchallenged in the offensiveness stakes until ANL bassist Winston stuck a carrot up his bum and then ate it.**

Those were fun times. Because we had no future, everything we did was made up on the spot. Nothing was off limits. Even now, we're still out of control.

**Given the lyrical content of *So What?*, were the band's gigs ever picketed by slightly less vigorous animal lovers?**

People accuse me of hating women, and I've been spat at in the street for that. But after more than thirty years of marriage I've raised a family. I'm considered racist, but my son-in-law is black. I can't help writing these really sick, nasty songs that pop into my head, but I think they're pretty funny.

**Almost forty years later, would the Anti-Nowhere League still exist without the patronage of Metallica?**

I don't know. When I joined them on stage at Wembley [in 1992] it spurred me into putting the band back together. When they asked why we weren't working, I couldn't answer. Punk was on its knees at the time, but [the reunion] has gone really well. It's better than being in a nursing home.

**Do you still live in that simmering hotbed of anarchy, Royal Tunbridge Wells?**

Yeah. We've become part of the furniture. The pubs kicked me out so many times they've stopped trying. **DL**

*Anti-Nowhere League's last gig of 2019 is in Tunbridge Wells on December 21.*



# Tour Dates

## THE 69 EYES

London	Highbury Garage	Nov 21
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## AFTER THE STORM DANNY VAUGHN, ULI JON ROTH, NATHAN JAMES (UNPLUGGED)

Troon	Concert Hall	Dec 1
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## AGNOSTIC FRONT

London	Camden Underworld	Nov 20
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## AIRBOURNE, TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN

Norwich	UEA	Nov 13
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 14
Manchester	Academy	Nov 16
Newcastle	Academy	Nov 17
Aberdeen	Beach Ballroom	Nov 18
Inverness	Ironworks	Nov 20
Glasgow	Barrowland	Nov 21
Liverpool	Academy	Nov 22
Cardiff	University	Nov 24
Bristol	Academy	Nov 25
London	Kentish Town Forum	Nov 26
Sheffield	Academy	Nov 28
Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 29
Oxford	Academy	Nov 30

## AIRRACE, THE TREATMENT

Oxford	Academy	Nov 15
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## ALABAMA 3

Manchester	The Ritz	Dec 13
Glasgow	Barrowland	Dec 14
Bristol	Academy	Dec 20
London	Brixton Academy	Dec 21

## ART ALEXAKIS

Manchester	Night & Day Café	Oct 14
Norwich	Epic Studios	Oct 15
London	Islington Academy	Oct 16
Glasgow	Broadcast	Oct 18
Birmingham	Actress & Bishop	Oct 19
Dublin	Sound House	Oct 20

## ALCATRAZZ FEATURING GRAHAM BONNET, THE JOKERS, EVLYTYDE

London	Camden Underworld	Sep 19
Skegness	Suncastle	Sep 20
Buckley	Tivoli	Sep 21
Swansea	Sin City	Sep 22
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Sep 23
Belfast	Limelight	Sep 25
Dublin	Button Factory	Sep 26
Bradford	Nightrain	Sep 28
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Sep 29
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Sep 30
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 1

## ALTER BRIDGE, SHINEDOWN, SEVENDUST

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 14
Manchester	Arena	Dec 15
Glasgow	The Hydro	Dec 17
Birmingham	Arena	Dec 18
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Dec 20
London	O2 Arena	Dec 21

## AMON AMARTH, ARCH ENEMY, HYPOCRISY

Birmingham	Academy	Nov 28
Manchester	Apollo	Nov 29
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 30

## BIG BIG TRAIN, SWEET BILLY PILGRIM

Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Oct 26
Newcastle	City Hall	Oct 27
Halifax	Victoria Theatre	Oct 29
Birmingham	Town Hall	Oct 30
Newport	Riverfront	Nov 1
London	Hackney Empire	Nov 2

## BIGFOOT

Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Sep 20
Sheffield	Corporation	Sep 21
Manchester	Rebellion	Sep 28

## BLACK FLAG

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Oct 7
Birmingham	The Mill	Oct 8
Norwich	Waterfront	Oct 9
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Oct 11
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 12
Manchester	Academy 2	Oct 13

## BLACK STAR RIDERS, STONE BROKEN, WAYWARD SONS

Bristol	Academy	Oct 10
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Oct 11

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 12
Wrexham	William Aston Hall	Oct 13
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 14
Limerick	Dolan's Warehouse	Oct 15
Dublin	Academy	Oct 16
Belfast	Limelight	Oct 17
Newcastle	Academy	Oct 19
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 20
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Oct 22
Bournemouth	Academy	Oct 23
Cardiff	University Great Hall	Oct 24
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 25
Leeds	Academy	Oct 26

## THE BLUES BAND

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Mar 6
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## DANNY BRYANT

London	Camden Dingwalls	Sep 20
Derby	Flowerpot	Oct 3
Bridport	Electric Palace	Oct 4
Liverpool	Music Room	Oct 8
Kinross	Green Hotel	Oct 9
Chesterfield	Real Time	Oct 10
Cockermouth	Kirkgate Arts Theatre	Oct 13
Stockton-on-Tees	Georgian Theatre	Oct 16
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 17
Louth	Town Hall	Oct 19

## BUCKCHERRY, THE TREATMENT, ROCKY KRAMER

Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 1
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Nov 2
Reading	Sub 89	Nov 3
London	Islington Academy	Nov 5
Blackpool	Waterloo Music Bar	Nov 6
Great Yarmouth	Hard Rock Hell	Nov 8
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 9
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 10

## BUDE BLUES, RHYTHM & ROCK FESTIVAL

Stevie Nimmo Trio, Bel Bromham's Blues Devils, more		
Bude	Penstowe Manor	Nov 8-10

## PHIL CAMPBELL & THE BASTARD SONS, KING CREATURE

Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Oct 29
Glasgow	Classic Grand	Oct 30
Manchester	Rebellion	Nov 1
London	Tufnell Park Dome	Nov 2
Norwich	Epic Studios	Nov 3
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Nov 4
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Nov 6
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Nov 7
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Nov 8
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 9

## CARAVAN

Haslemere	Hall	Oct 12
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## CATS IN SPACE

Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 12
Swansea	Patti Pavilion	Dec 14
Tavistock	Wharf	Dec 15
London	Highbury Garage	Dec 16
Norwich	Epic Studios	Dec 18
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Dec 19
Buckley	Tivoli	Dec 20

## CITY OF THIEVES

London	Camden Underworld	Sep 21
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## Recommended

## CLUTCH, GRAVEYARD, KAMCHATKA

Southampton	Guildhall	Dec 17
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 18
Leeds	Academy	Dec 19
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 20

## COCKNEY REJECTS

Southampton	The Brook	Nov 8
London	Islington Academy	Dec 14

## COMMUNION OF ROCK FESTIVAL GIRLSCHOOL, THE TREATMENT, GIN ANNIE, MORE

Pontypridd	Muni Arts Centre	Oct 11-13
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## ALICE COOPER, THE STRANGLERS, MC50

Manchester	Arena	Oct 4
Aberdeen	TECA	Oct 5
Leeds	First Direct Arena	Oct 7

## OZZY OSBOURNE



The Prince Of Darkness boards the crazy train for a trip around the UK in January/February. All aboard!

See over page for dates. Currently January 31 to February 14.

Brighton	Centre	Oct 8
London	O2 Arena	Oct 10
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Oct 11
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Oct 12

## CORNWALL ROCKS QUIREBOYS, DIAMOND HEAD, MASSIVE WAGONS, MORE

Looe	Tencreek Holiday Park	Nov 15-17
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## THE CULT

Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 15
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 17
Cardiff	University	Oct 17
Leeds	Academy	Oct 20
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Oct 21
Glasgow	Academy	Oct 22
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 24
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 27
Bristol	Academy	Oct 28
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Oct 29

## CURVED AIR

Dundee	The Church	Sep 27
Aberdeen	The Assembly	Sep 28
Glasgow	Slay Glasgow	Sep 29
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Oct 17

## DAMNATION FESTIVAL OPETH, MAYHEM, VINTAGE CARAVAN, MORE

Leeds	University Union	Nov 2
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## THE DAMNED

London	Palladium	Oct 28
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## DANNY AND LUKE FROM THUNDER UNPLUGGED & UNSCRIPTED

Camberley	Theatre	Oct 2
Wimborne	Tivoli	Oct 3
Taunton	Brewhouse	Oct 4
Maesteg	Town Hall	Oct 5
St Alban	Alban Arena	Oct 9
Chesterfield	Winding Wheel	Oct 10
Leeds	City Varieties	Oct 11
Coventry	Albany Theatre	Oct 12
Kettering	The Lighthouse	Oct 16
Lichfield	Garrick Theatre	Oct 17
Clacton-on-Sea	West Cliff Theatre	Oct 18
Stamford	Corn Exchange	Oct 19
Redditch	Palace Theatre	Oct 23
Crewe	Lyceum	Oct 24
Scarborough	Spa Theatre	Oct 25
Workington	Carnegie Theatre	Oct 26

## THE DARKNESS

Belfast	Limelight	Nov 26
Dublin	Academy	Nov 27
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 29
Birmingham	Academy	Dec 1
Leicester	Academy	Dec 2
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Dec 3
Norwich	UEA	Dec 5
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Dec 6
Bath	Pavilions	Dec 7
Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Dec 9
Brighton	Dome	Dec 10
Watford	Colosseum	Dec 11
Manchester	Academy	Dec 13
Newcastle	Academy	Dec 14

Glasgow	Academy	Dec 15
York	Barbican	Dec 17
Liverpool	Academy	Dec 18
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 20

## DEMON, TOKYO BLADE, HEAVY SENTENCE, PARISH

London	Holloway Nambucca	Nov 17
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## DIAMOND HEAD

Dover	Booking Hall	Nov 10
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## DRIVIN' N' CRYIN'

Sheffield	The Dorothy Pax	Oct 9
Nottingham	Old Cold Store	Oct 10
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 12
London	Highbury Garage	Oct 13
Birmingham	Hare & Hound	Oct 14

## BRIAN DOWNEY'S ALIVE AND DANGEROUS

London	Camden Underworld	Nov 7
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## FRANCIS DUNNERY'S IT BITES

Glasgow	St Luke's	Jan 16
Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Jan 17
Manchester	Club Academy	Jan 18
London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Jan 19

## THE ENID

Bury	The Met	Oct 25
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## DON FELDER

London	Shepherd's Bush Bush Hall	Sep 19
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## HEATHER FINDLAY

York	NCEM	Dec 20
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Jan 9
London	Highbury Garage	Jan 10
Bristol	Thekla	Jan 11
Newcastle	Riverside	Jan 15
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Jan 16
Bilston	Robin 2	Jan 22

## FIST

London	Camden Unicorn	Nov 15
Newcastle	TrilliansO	Jan 24

## THE FLOWER KINGS, KAYAK

London	Kings Cross Scala	Dec 8
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## FLYING COLORS

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Dec 14
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## FOCUS, CHANTEL McGREGOR

Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 4
Grimsby	Central Hall	Oct 5
London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Oct 25

## FUNERAL FOR A FRIEND

Cardiff	The Globe	Oct 28
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 29

## GHOST, ALL THEM WITCHES, TRIBULATION

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 16
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 17
Glasgow	The Hydro	Nov 18
Dublin	3 Arena	Nov 20
London	Wembley Arena	Nov 22
Leeds	Arena	Nov 23





# LIVE!

## GIANTS OF ROCK FESTIVAL HAWKWIND, GUN, QUIREBOYS MORE

Minehead	Butlins	Jan 24-27
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### PAUL GILBERT

Manchester	Academy 3	Sep 19
Reading	Sub 89	Sep 20
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Sep 21
London	Islington Academy	Sep 22
Birmingham	The Mill	Sep 23
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Sep 24

### GRETA VAN FLEET

Leeds	Academy	Nov 3
Dublin	Olympia	Nov 4
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 6
Newcastle	Academy	Nov 7
Liverpool	Mountford Hall	Nov 9
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 10

### STEVE HACKETT

Aylesbury	Waterside	Nov 2
Folkestone	Leas Cliff Hall	Nov 3
Sheffield	City Hall	Nov 5
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 6
Leicester	De Montfort Hall	Nov 8
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 9
Liverpool	Philharmonic	Nov 11
Brighton	Dome	Nov 12
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Nov 13
Salisbury	City Hall	Nov 15
Reading	Hexagon	Nov 16
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Nov 18
York	Barbican	Nov 19
Bath	Forum	Nov 20
Halifax	Victoria Theatre	Nov 22
Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 23
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Nov 25
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Nov 26
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Nov 27
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Nov 29

### HALESTORM, IN THIS MOMENT, NEW YEARS DAY

Glasgow	Hydro	Nov 24
Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 25
Cardiff	Motorpoint Arena	Nov 27
London	Alexandra Palace	Nov 28

### HARD ROCK HELL DEE SNIDER, MICHAEL MONROE, DORO, BUCKCHERRY, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Resort	Nov 7-10
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### HARD ROCK HELL AOR GREAT WHITE, AUTOGRAPH, ECLIPSE, MORE

Great Yarmouth	Vauxhall Holiday Resort	Mar 12-15
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### HARD ROCK HELL DOOM VS STONER ORANGE GOBLIN, FIREBALL MINISTRY, MONOLORD, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Sep 28, 29
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### HARD ROCK HELL GOTH FEATURING INDUSTRIAL FIELDS OF THE NEPHILIM, MY DYING BRIDE, KMFDM, MORE

London	Kentish Town Forum	Sep 12, 13
Sheffield	Academy	Sep 12, 13

### HARD ROCK HELL PROG VII THE PINEAPPLE THIEF, URIAH HEEP, GONG, MORE

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 26, 27
Sheffield	Academy	Oct 26, 27

### HARD ROCK HELL PROG IX RICK WAKEMAN, DAVE BROCK, JOHN LEES' BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST, MORE

London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Mar 28, 29
Sheffield	Academy	Mar 28, 29

### HARD ROCK HELL PUNK ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE, CHELSEA, COCKNEY REJECTS, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Oct 5, 6
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### HARD ROCK HELL VIKINGS FINNTROLL, HEIDEVOLK, MOONSORROW, MORE

Sheffield	Academy	Nov 30-Dec 1
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### HAWKLORDS

Norwich	Brickmakers	Oct 17
Hitchin	Club 85	Oct 18
Brighton	Prince Albert	Oct 19
Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 20
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 22
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Oct 23
Glasgow	Audio	Oct 24
Newcastle	The Cluny	Oct 25
Sheffield	Hard Rock Hell Prog	Oct 26
London	Hard Rock Hell Prog	Oct 27
Southampton	1865	Oct 29
Bridgewater	The Cobblestones	Oct 30

## AIRBOURNE



'Back in bla...' Sorry, that's the other Aussie band who belt out mighty killer riffs. In their absence, these guys fill the void nicely.

See previous page for dates. Currently November 13-30.

Plymouth	The Junction	Oct 31
Swansea	Hangar 18	Nov 1
Bradford	The Mill	Nov 2
Worcester	Marrs Bar	Nov 3

### HAWKWIND, THE BLACKHEART ORCHESTRA

Brighton	Theatre Royal	Nov 10
York	Opera House	Nov 11
Ipswich	Corn Exchange	Nov 12
Basingstoke	The Anvil	Nov 13
Manchester	Albert Hall	Nov 13
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Nov 16
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 17
Cambridge	Corn Exchange	Nov 18
Bristol	Anson Rooms	Nov 19
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 20
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 22
Birmingham	Town Hall	Nov 23
Coventry	Empire	Nov 24
Guilford	G Live	Nov 25
London	Royal Albert Hall	Nov 26

### THE STEVE HILLAGE BAND, GONG

Southampton	Engine Rooms	Nov 14
Aylesbury	Friars Waterside	Nov 15
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Nov 16
Glasgow	Warehouse	Nov 17
Sheffield	Academy 2	Nov 18
Bristol	Academy	Nov 20
Birmingham	Institute 2	Nov 21
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 22
Liverpool	Academy	Nov 23
Brighton	Concorde 2	Nov 24

### WARNER E HODGES BAND

Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Sep 19
Sutton	Boom Boom Club	Sep 20
London	Archway The Lounge	Sep 21
Kinross	Green Hotel	Sep 22
Chislehurst	Beaverwood Club	Sep 24
Kendal	Bootleggers Bar	Sep 26
Keighley	Studio 5	Sep 27

## Recommended

### GLENN HUGHES PERFORMS CLASSIC DEEP PURPLE

Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Nov 16
Salisbury	City Hall	Nov 17
Cambridge	Junction	Nov 19
Norwich	Waterfront	Nov 20
Cheltenham	Town Hall	Nov 22
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Nov 23
Aberdeen	Music Hall	Nov 25
Inverness	Ironworks	Nov 26
Middlesbrough	Town Hall	Nov 28
Birmingham	Institute	Nov 29

### INGLORIOUS

Northampton	Roadmender	Oct 17
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 18
Clitheroe	The Grand	Oct 19
Edinburgh	La Belle Angele	Oct 20
Hull	The Welly	Oct 22

Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 23
Buckley	Tivoli	Oct 24
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 25
Gloucester	Guildhall	Oct 27
Oxford	Academy	Oct 28
Cardiff	Tramshed	Oct 29
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Oct 30
Brighton	Concorde 2	Nov 1

### IQ

London	Highbury Garage	Dec 6
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### JADIS

Wolverhampton	Slade Rooms	Nov 15
Wakefield	Warehouse 23	Nov 16
Southampton	Hangar Farm Arts Centre	Nov 17
London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Nov 18

### JANUS STARK

London	Islington Hope & Anchor	Oct 24
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### JCM - IN MEMORY OF JON HISEMAN

London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Sep 22
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### LAURENCE JONES, MATT PEARCE & THE MUTINY

Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Nov 22
London	Hackney Oslo	Nov 23
Southampton	1865	Nov 24
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Nov 26
Newcastle	The Cluny	Nov 30
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Dec 1
Sheffield	The Greystones	Dec 3
Chester	Live Rooms	Dec 4
Birmingham	Actress & Bishop	Dec 5
Porthcawl	Planet Rockstock	Dec 6
Leek	Foxlowe Arts Centre	Dec 7
Nottingham	Bodega	Dec 8
Leeds	Lending Room	Dec 12
Manchester	Night & Day Café	Dec 13

### KILLSWITCH ENGAGE

Norwich	UEA	Oct 14
Bristol	Academy	Oct 15
Glasgow	Barrowland	Oct 17
Manchester	Academy	Oct 18
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 19
London	Brixton Academy	Oct 20

### KINGDOM OF MADNESS

Troon	South Beach Sessions	Oct 4
Kinross	Green Hotel	Oct 5

### KING'S X

Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Sep 20
Gateshead	Sage 2	Sep 21
Glasgow	Garage	Sep 22
Manchester	Academy 2	Sep 24
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Sep 25
Cambridge	Junction	Sep 27
Norwich	Waterfront	Sep 28
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Sep 29

### KISSIN' DYNAMITE, BLACKRAIN

London	Camden Underworld	Oct 18
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### SONNY LANDRETH, SON OF DAVE

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Jan 23
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### MARK LANEGAN BAND

London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 10
Bristol	SWX	Dec 11
Sheffield	Leadmill	Dec 13
Edinburgh	Liquid Rooms	Dec 14
Manchester	The Ritz	Dec 15
Dublin	Button Factory	Dec 17
Belfast	Empire Music Hall	Dec 18

### LEPROUS, THE OCEAN, PORT NOIR

London	Malet Street ULU	Nov 8
Manchester	Academy 2	Nov 9

### LIFE OF AGONY

London	Islington Academy	Oct 22
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Oct 23
Birmingham	The Mill	Oct 25
Manchester	Club Academy	Oct 26
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 27
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Oct 29
Bristol	The Fleece	Oct 30

### LONDON PUNK FESTIVAL ANTI NOWHERE LEAGUE, DISCHARGE, CHRON GEN, MORE

London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Sep 21
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### MACHINE HEAD

London	Brixton Academy	Nov 2
Manchester	Victoria Warehouse	Nov 4
Glasgow	Academy	Nov 5
Belfast	Telegraph Building	Nov 7
Dublin	Olympia	Nov 8

### MAGMA

London	Islington Assembly Hall	Oct 4
Newcastle	Tusk Festival	Oct 13

### MAN

Pershore	Iron Road	Sep 26
Kinross	Green Hotel	Sep 27
Scarborough	Apollo Bar	Sep 28
Wavendon	The Stables	Sep 30
Cardiff	Earl Haig	Oct 2

### MARILLION WITH FRIENDS FROM THE ORCHESTRA

Liverpool	Philharmonic	Nov 1
Nottingham	Royal Concert Hall	Nov 3
Manchester	Bridgewater Hall	Nov 4
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Nov 6
Portsmouth	Guildhall	Nov 7
Bath	Forum	Nov 9
Oxford	New Theatre	Nov 10
Glasgow	Royal Concert Hall	Nov 12
Gateshead	The Sage	Nov 13
Southend-on-Sea	Cliffs Pavilion	Nov 15
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 16
London	Royal Albert Hall	Nov 18, 19

### BERNIE MARSDEN, DEBORAH BONHAM

London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Jan 24
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### MARSEILLE

Darwen	Big House Blues Bar	Dec 6
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### MASCHINE, DISTRICT 97

Bilston	Robin 2	Oct 7
Leicester	The Musician	Oct 8
London	Gt Portland Street 229 Club	Oct 9
Fletching	Trading Boundaries	Oct 10

### CHANTEL MCGREGOR

Nottingham	Bodega	Sep 20
Bromsgrove	The Artrix	Sep 21
Reading	Face Bar	Sep 23
Lyme Regis	Marine Theatre	Sep 24
Southport	The Atkinson	Sep 28
Stockton-On-Tees	ARC	Oct 2

### MICHAEL MONROE

London	Islington Academy	Oct 30
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 1
Milton Keynes	Craufurd Arms	Nov 2
Southampton	Engine Room	Nov 3
Birmingham	The Mill	Nov 4
Glasgow	Garage	Nov 5
Manchester	Club Academy	Nov 6
Bristol	The Fleece	Nov 7
Stoke-on-Trent	Sugarmill	Nov 8
Great Yarmouth	Hard Rock Hell	Nov 9

### MONSTERFEST GUN, MASSIVE WAGONS, ROMEO'S DAUGHTER, MORE

Inverness	Ironworks	Nov 15, 16
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### NEW MODEL ARMY

Southampton	1865	Oct 8
Bristol	SWX	Nov 13
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Nov 14
Cambridge	Junction	Nov 15
Leeds	Stylus	Nov 16
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 17
Chester	Live Rooms	Nov 19



Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Nov 20
Edinburgh	Liquid Rooms	Nov 21
Manchester	The Ritz	Nov 22
Birmingham	Institute	Nov 23
Brighton	Concorde 2	Dec 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 21

THE NEW ROSES

London	Manette Street Borderline	Nov 28
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NORDIC NOISE UK  
TYGERS OF PAN TANG, BLITZKRIEG,  
STATEMENT, MORE

Newcastle	Think Tank	Nov 22, 23
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OPETH, VINTAGE CARAVAN

Norwich	UEA	Oct 27
London	Palladium	Oct 29
Glasgow	SWG Galvanizers	Oct 31
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Nov 1
Leeds	Damnation Festival	Nov 2
Bristol	Academy	Nov 3

ORANGE GOBLIN

London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Dec 20
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OZZY OSBOURNE, JUDAS PRIEST

Nottingham	Motorpoint Arena	Jan 31
Dublin	3 Arena	Feb 2
Manchester	Arena	Feb 5
Newcastle	Utilita Arena	Feb 7
London	O2 Arena	Feb 10
Glasgow	The Hydro	Feb 12
Birmingham	Resorts World Arena	Feb 14

GRAHAM PARKER (UNPLUGGED)

Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Nov 21
Leek	Foxlowe Arts	Nov 22
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Nov 23
London	Highbury Union Chapel	Nov 25
Bury St Edmunds	Apex	Nov 26
Bromsgrove	Artrix	Nov 28
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Nov 29
Bury	The Met	Nov 30
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Dec 3
Chester	Live Rooms	Dec 5
Chippenham	Neeld Community & Arts	Dec 6
Newbury	Arlington Arts Centre	Dec 7

PIXIES

London	Alexandra Palace	Sep 20
Newcastle	Academy	Sep 21
Glasgow	Academy	Sep 22
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Sep 23
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Sep 25
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Sep 26

COZY POWELL BIRTHDAY BASH  
NEIL MURRAY, HARRY JAMES, CHRIS GLEN,  
MORE

Bilston	Robin 2	Dec 29
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PRAYING MANTIS

Norwich	Brickmakers	Nov 7
Great Yarmouth	Hard Rock Hell	Nov 8
London	New Cross Inn	Nov 9

PSYCHEDELIC FURS,  
THE WENDY JAMES BAND

Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 1
Portsmouth	Pyramid Centre	Oct 3
Brighton	Dome	Oct 4
Birmingham	Institute	Oct 5
Leeds	Stylus	Oct 7
Glasgow	Academy	Oct 8
Newcastle	Academy	Oct 9
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 11
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Oct 12

RAMMSTEIN

Cardiff	Principality Stadium	Jun 14
Coventry	Ricoh Arena	Jun 20

THE RASMUS

Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 7
Bristol	Academy	Oct 11
London	Kentish Town Forum	Oct 12

THE RAVEN AGE

London	Tufnell Park Dome	Dec 13
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DAN REED NETWORK, FM, GUN

Bristol	Academy	Dec 9
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 10
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Dec 11
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Dec 13
Norwich	UEA	Dec 14
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 15
Newcastle	Academy	Dec 17
Leeds	Academy	Dec 18
Manchester	Academy 2	Dec 20
Glasgow	Barrowland	Dec 21

RIVAL SONS

Liverpool	Academy	Nov 2
London	Brixton Academy	Nov 3

HALESTORM



Lzzy Hale and co. kick up a storm (aw, come on, it wrote itself!) and lash four British dates in November.

See opposite page for dates. Currently November 24-28.

Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 5
Edinburgh	Usher Hall	Nov 6
Bristol	Academy	Nov 7
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Mar 22

ULI JON ROTH

Buckley	Tivoli	Nov 22
Scarborough	Apollo	Nov 23
Barnsley	Birdwell Venue	Nov 24
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 25
London	Camden Underworld	Nov 26
Stoke-on-Trent	Eleven	Nov 27
Blackpool	Waterloo Bar	Nov 28
Edinburgh	Bannerman's Bar	Nov 29
Troon	Winterstorm Festival	Nov 30, Dec 1

ROYAL REPUBLIC

Norwich	Waterfront	Oct 18
Nottingham	Rock City	Oct 19
Glasgow	Garage	Oct 20
Newcastle	University	Oct 22
Hull	The Welly	Oct 23
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Oct 24
Manchester	Academy 2	Oct 26
Birmingham	Academy	Oct 27
Bristol	Trinity Centre	Oct 28
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Oct 30
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Oct 31

SABATON, APOCALYPTICA, AMARANTHE

London	Wembley Arena	Feb 8
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SAXON

Glasgow	Braehead Arena	Oct 18
London	Hammersmith Apollo	Oct 19
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 20

SARI SCHORR

Wotton	Blues Fest	Sep 21
Shoreham-by-Sea	Ropetackle Arts Centre	Sep 26
Bath	Chapel Arts Centre	Sep 27
Hook	Echo Hotel Music Club	Sep 28
Sheffield	The Greystones	Nov 3

THE SISTERS OF MERCY

London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Sep 20, 21
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SKID ROW, THE QUIREBOYS

Wakefield	Warehouse	Nov 30
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 1
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Dec 3
Cardiff	Tramshed	Dec 4
Sheffield	Winter Rocks	Dec 7
Birmingham	The Mill	Dec 8

SPACE ROCKS  
ANATHEMA, VOYAGER AUSTRALIA, MORE

London	IndigO2	Sep 21
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SPEAR OF DESTINY

Manchester	Gorilla	Sep 21
London	Chelsea Under The Bridge	Sep 28

STATIC-X, SOIL, WEDNESDAY 13, DOPE

Bristol	SWX	Sep 24
Cardiff	Tramshed	Sep 25
London	Camden Electric Ballroom	Sep 26
Nottingham	Rock City	Sep 27
Leeds	Stylus	Sep 28

Southampton	Engine Room	Sep 29
Newcastle	Northumbria Institute	Oct 01
Glasgow	Garage	Oct 2
Manchester	The Ritz	Oct 3
Birmingham	Institute	Oct 4

Recommended

THE STRUTS

Manchester	Academy	Oct 11
Edinburgh	Liquid Room	Oct 12
Sheffield	Leadmill	Oct 13
Norwich	UEA	Oct 15
London	Kentish Town Forum	Oct 16
Cardiff	Great Hall	Oct 17
Leicester	Academy	Oct 19
Bournemouth	Academy	Oct 20

SUNN O)))

London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Oct 28
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SWEET

Frome	Cheese & Grain	Nov 28
Holmfirth	Picturedome	Nov 29
Stockton-on-Tees	The Arc	Nov 30
Nottingham	Rescue Rooms	Dec 1
Bury	St Edmonds Apex	Dec 5
Warrington	Parr Hall	Dec 6
Barrow In Furness	Forum	Dec 7
Glasgow	Oran Mor	Dec 8
Gateshead	The Sage	Dec 12
Aberdeen	Lemon Tree	Dec 13
Edinburgh	Queens Hall	Dec 14
Clitheroe	Grand	Dec 15
London	Islington Assembly Hall	Dec 18
Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Dec 19
Southampton	1865	Dec 20
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Dec 21

SWEET CRISIS

Cardiff	Club Ifor Bach	Nov 15
London	Oxford Street 100 Club	Nov 19
Derby	Flowerpot	Nov 28
Birmingham	Castle & Falcon	Nov 29

TEDESCHI TRUCKS BAND,  
BLACKBERRY SMOKE

London	Wembley Arena	Feb 1
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THUNDER

Birmingham	Academy	Dec 20
Manchester	Academy	Dec 21

DEVIN TOWNSEND, HAKEN

Cardiff	Great Hall	Dec 5
Dublin	Academy	Dec 6
Belfast	Limelight	Dec 7
Glasgow	SWG3 Galvanisers	Dec 9
London	Albert Hall	Dec 10
London	Chalk Farm Roundhouse	Dec 12
Nottingham	Rock City	Dec 13

WALTER TROUT

Exeter	Phoenix Arts Centre	Oct 3
Southampton	1865	Oct 4

TOUR DATES

Norwich	Open	Oct 5
Brighton	Concorde 2	Oct 6
Bristol	The Fleece	Oct 8
Birmingham	Town Hall	Oct 9
Burnley	Mechanics	Oct 10
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Oct 11
Sheffield	Academy	Oct 12

ROBIN TROWER, LIVINGSTONE BROWN,  
SARI SCHORR

Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 24
Edinburgh	Queen's Hall	Oct 25
Newcastle	Boiler Shop	Oct 27
Birmingham	Town Hall	Oct 28
London	Shepherd's Bush Empire	Oct 29

FRANK TURNER

Dumfermline	Alhambra Theatre	Nov 22
Cardiff	St David's Hall	Nov 24
Southampton	Guildhall	Nov 25
Manchester	Opera House	Nov 26
Newcastle	City Hall	Nov 27
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Nov 29
London	Alexandra Palace	Nov 30, Dec 3
Birmingham	Symphony Hall	Dec 1

TYKETTO

Nuneaton	Queens Hall	Oct 25
Sheffield	Corporation	Oct 26

URIAH HEEP, DIAMOND HEAD

Norwich	UEA	Dec 4
Bexhill	De La Warr Pavilion	Dec 6

VOLBEAT, BARONESS, DANKO JONES

Newcastle	Academy	Sep 23
Glasgow	Academy	Sep 24
London	Brixton Academy	Sep 26
Bristol	Academy	Sep 28
Birmingham	Academy	Sep 30
Manchester	Apollo	Oct 1
Belfast	Ulster Hall	Oct 3
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Oct 4

RICK WAKEMAN'S GRUMPY OLD  
CHRISTMAS SHOW

London	Belgravia Cadogan Hall	Dec 6
Watford	Colosseum	Dec 7
Birmingham	Town Hall	Dec 9
Harrogate	Royal Hall	Dec 10
Buxton	Opera House	Dec 13
Poole	Lighthouse	Dec 15
Liverpool	Grand Central	Dec 18
Manchester	RNCM	Dec 19

WHITBY ROCKS  
ZAL CLEMINSON'S SIN DOGS,  
KEN PUSTELNIK'S GROUNDHOGS, STRAY

Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 11
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WHITBY BLUES FESTIVAL  
ALBERT LEE, IAN PARKER, LUKE DOHERTY  
BAND, MORE

Whitby	Pavilion	Oct 12
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THE WILDHEARTS

Brighton	Concorde 2	Oct 5
Chester	Live Rooms	Oct 7
Hull	Welly	Oct 8
Holmfirth	Picturedrome	Oct 10
Cambridge	Junction	Oct 15
Bath	Komedia	Oct 16
Southampton	Engine Rooms	Oct 17
Wolverhampton	KK's Steel Mill	Oct 21

WILDWOOD KIN

Norwich	Waterfront Studio	Nov 6
Birmingham	Academy 3	Nov 7
Manchester	Night & Day Café	Nov 8
London	Omeara	Nov 11
Bath	Moles Club	Nov 12
Cardiff	Glee Club	Nov 13
Bristol	Thekla	Nov 14
Bude	Folk Festival	Nov 15
Southampton	Joiners Arms	Nov 17
Brighton	Komedia	Nov 18
Exeter	Lemon Grove	Nov 21
Liverpool	Leaf	Nov 28
Whitby	Pavilion	Nov 29
Edinburgh	Caves	Dec 1
Glasgow	Stereo	Dec 2
Newcastle	The Cluny	Nov 3
Leeds	Brudenell Social Club	Dec 4

WINTERSTORM FESTIVAL  
FM, H.E.A.T, SKID ROW, ULI JON ROTH, MORE

Troon	Concert Hall	Nov 29-Dec 1
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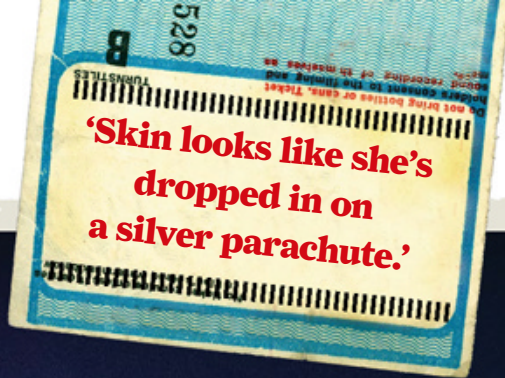
Y&T

Southampton	The Brook	Oct 30
Bilston	Robin 2	Nov 1
London	Islington Academy	Nov 2
Cardiff	Tramshed	Nov 3
Glasgow	Garage	Nov 7
Newcastle	Academy	Nov 8
Nottingham	Rock City	Nov 9





# LIVE!



**Skunk Anansie's Skin:** boasting a beam-quaking voice while fronting a musical time machine.



## Skunk Anansie

London Brixton O2 Academy

**Skin and co. turn up the heat for a packed audience that's already being cooked to medium-rare.**

★ Skunk Anansie singer Skin looks like she's dropped in through the Academy ceiling on a silver parachute and got it tangled behind her in a series of looping tresses. "It looks like she's wearing a shiny bin bag," says someone to my right, rather unkindly. Whatever your take on her opening outfit tonight, it's offset by a pair of shoulder pads that might make Grace Jones blanch. For one shimmering moment, Skin's stage outfit is almost as big as her stage persona and presence.

In a show that's either oversold or has a bigger guest list than most South American countries have members of the military, and in the kind of heat you imagine might even make fire fighters pause, it would be easy to wilt and wane and find the bar. That is if Skunk Anansie and Skin – celebrating 25 years as a band – weren't upending the very equilibrium of the venue we're in. Within just a few songs – *Charlie Big Potato*, *Because Of You* – the band's musical history is instantly refracted through the prism of both distinct halves of their career; two songs 10 years apart and separated by a band break-up and re-formation, reflecting the aural sonics of both eras, production, punch and the adaptability of the band to move

seamlessly through time. It helps that Skin's voice is making the building's beams quake, but she can rise and fall like the wave consuming the fishing boat in *The Perfect Storm*, at one point quietly chiding the audience for watching the show via their phones – an audience which, you'd presume, looking around you, is old enough to know better.

As the performance and heat escalate, someone, sucking in air like a goldfish suddenly out of its bowl, is carried out of the room in the arms of two friends. A couple walk in through the rear doors of the auditorium, which is backed up to the rear walls and has standing room only, and quickly start arguing with each other about there being literally no room to move. The packed-in audience, enthralled by the musical tumult coming from the stage, stand straining to see, glistening like glazed doughnuts, heads thrown back, singing as hard as they must have the first time they heard *Weak*. The moment is sullied only by a multitude of beefy dads with phones bigger than their heads deciding that this is absolutely the moment they must capture for their Facebook page; a moment lost in a vista of thick



forearms and crystal screens, Skin slipping in and out of focus on each one.

That, though, is brushed away by the roar that greets *Hedonism*, the subsequent singalong being mostly the reserve of moist-eyed women who you might imagine listened to it over and over while their thoughts stewed somewhere between heartbreak and revenge. The song's a thriller, though, as is the fragile *Secretly* or the kick to the head that is *Yes It's Fucking Political* and the bleak thunder of *Little Baby Swastikkka*. Paul Weller and the band help to take us all tripping back through time with a cover of his *You Do Something To Me*, as security jam the doors open to let air in to freshen the soup that everyone's been sucking into their lungs all night.

No one's complaining, though. Dazed punters blink into the foyer lights, pulling at sweaty T-shirts clinging to their backs, heads shaking like wet dogs, 25 years of memories still clinging to their skin.

*Philip Wilding*



# AIRBOURNE



WITH SPECIAL GUESTS

**TYLER BRYANT & THE SHAKEDOWN**

NOVEMBER 2019

WED	13	NORWICH UEA
THU	14	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
SAT	16	MANCHESTER ACADEMY
SUN	17	NEWCASTLE O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
MON	18	ABERDEEN BEACH BALLROOM
WED	20	INVERNESS IRONWORKS
THU	21	GLASGOW BARROWLAND
FRI	22	LIVERPOOL O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
SUN	24	CARDIFF UNIVERSITY
MON	25	BRISTOL O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
TUE	26	LONDON O <sub>2</sub> FORUM KENTISH TOWN
THU	28	SHEFFIELD O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY
FRI	29	SOUTHAMPTON O <sub>2</sub> GUILDHALL
SAT	30	OXFORD O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY

LIVENATION.CO.UK | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK

A LIVE NATION & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X RAY

# ALTER BRIDGE

WALK THE SKY TOUR 2019



14-DEC  
NOTTINGHAM  
MOTORPOINT ARENA

15-DEC  
MANCHESTER  
ARENA

17-DEC  
GLASGOW  
THE SSE HYDRO

18-DEC  
BIRMINGHAM  
ARENA

20-DEC  
CARDIFF  
MOTORPOINT ARENA

21-DEC  
LONDON  
THE O2

"WALK THE SKY", THE NEW ALBUM FROM ALTER BRIDGE, OUT 18 OCTOBER.  
LIVENATION.CO.UK | TICKETMASTER.CO.UK | ALTERBRIDGE.COM



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www.ukguitarshow.com



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BREWER, PLUS A MASTERCLASS  
WITH PAUL GILBERT!

LIVE PERFORMANCE MASTERCLASSES  
GEAR HALL VINTAGE OPEN MIC  
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Guitar

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# Bloodstock Festival

Catton Hall, Derbyshire

Heroic war metal, great rock, classic thrash and more lead up to a festival-naming set from the headliners.

★ Michael Myers is here. So is Jesus. And Spiderman. There's also a vast array of real ales and mead on tap. Welcome to Bloodstock, one of the friendliest and best-organised festivals of the British summer.

On the first day, **Death Angel's** power and the class of **Metal Church** get things into gear, while headliners **Sabaton** have a spectacular stage set to augment their heroic war metal.

With a livewire attitude, **The Wildhearts** win over many new friends on the second day, but strong winds cause major disruption on the main stage. And although delayed, thankfully **Anthrax** are still able to play a set of classic thrash and get a rapturous reception.

The final day sees **Ross The Boss** sensibly sticking to a set of classic Manowar anthems, before guitarist KK Downing joins him as things are racked up a level for a quartet of iconic Judas Priest songs, and the perpetual motion and motormouth of **Dee Snider** is irresistible in a set that mixes Twisted Sister moments with songs from his current solo album *For The Love Of Metal*.

**Queensrÿche** play well, but lack any spark and fail to connect with an indifferent crowd, while headliners the **Scorpions** majestically sweep aside everyone else on the bill. Their performance, career-spanning song selection and massive stage set are peerless, and ensures that Bloodstock 2019 will forever be known as Scorpstock!

Malcolm Dome



Scorpions: peerless on all levels.

# Steelhouse Festival

Ebbw Vale Hafod-Y-Dafal Farm

Fun, sun and surprises in Wales.

★ With its established recipe of trusted names and worthy newcomers such as **Crobot**, **Hollowstar** and **Wille & The Bandits**, this year's Steelhouse adds an unfamiliar element – blazing sunshine from start to finish.

Throwing out a version of Zep's *Custard Pie* in the simmering heat, **The Temperance Movement** are a highlight of Saturday's line-up, while top dogs **Thunder** opt for a typically boisterous all-electric set, revelling in their only outdoor UK show of 2019.

The next day, an entertaining mix of non-stop hard-rocking anthems and charismatic delivery crowns **Danko Jones** as the weekend's biggest surprise. In glorious late-afternoon sunshine, **Uriah Heep** demonstrate how to mix songs from a new album, classic hits and deep cuts to absolute perfection. **Living Colour** are not everyone's cup of tea, but the crowd responds warmly when Bernie Marsden joins them to jam on Cream's *Sunshine Of Your Love*.

Regardless of one's opinion of their continued Lynott-less existence, **Thin Lizzy** – with Mastodon's Troy Sanders on bass and Scott Travis from Priest on drums – delight with an exclusive one-off 40th-anniversary revision of the *Black Rose* album. Although some in the crowd appear unfamiliar with its hidden gems, the likes of *Toughest Street In Town*, *S&M*, the ballad *Sarah* and the Celtic guitar overload of the epic title track are an absolute joy.

Dave Ling

# Prophets Of Rage

London Shepherd's Bush Empire

Factions are united in common cause.

★ The dots between rock and rap were joined up long ago, but arguably it's not until now that the full picture has been painted in such vivid colours to include racial oppression, class conflict and Herculean amounts of weed. If Prophets Of Rage's explosive show tonight proves anything, it's that insurrection can mine a groove and unify threads in a way that the other side never will.

It takes something special to get people mobilised on a Monday night, and something truly magnificent for them to lose their shit to. Here, tonight, shit is lost to such an extent that the rest of the week is effectively written off because nothing over the next seven days is going to touch Prophets Of Rage.

So it is that everyone in the entire venue – that's the stalls and three balconies – is on their feet and uniting with Rage Against The Machine's Tom Morello, Tim Commerford and Brad Wilk, Public Enemy's Chuck D and DJ Lord and Cypress Hill's B-Real in an explosion of catharsis.

Incendiary versions of *Insane In The Brain* and *Bring The Noise* are matched as the audience sings in tribute to the late Chris Cornell during *Cochise*. And while the group's own material is warmly welcomed, the biggest outpourings, not unexpectedly, occur during Rage Against The Machine's *Killing In The Name* and *Bullet In The Head* to create a righteous response to these darkened days.

Julian Marszalek

# Rammstein

Milton Keynes Stadium MK

Burning down the house with a teutonic orgy of environmental hostility.

★ With a stage set that looks like a post-Apocalyptic version of the Pompidou Centre, and with enough flames to consume several forests, Rammstein are an enigma wrapped up within a conflagration; an internationally successful rock band who sing only in German, purveyors of churning one-note riffs with a fierce intellectual bent, and a keyboard player who looks like C-3PO on a treadmill. On paper, it should never work, but Rammstein have for long enough been exploring the possibilities of what a stadium show can offer, and right now they're right at the absolute top of their game.

This is an extraordinary evening. From the moment acrid black smoke pumps into the arena – turning Stadium MK into industrial Leipzig circa 1984 – it's a series of spectacularly staged set pieces that have more in common with a Cirque du Soleil production than they do with your average rock'n'roll show. There's a terrifying baby in a flaming perambulator. A cannon that spunks soapy goo over the audience. And a trance remix of *Deutschland* that finds the band throwing interpretative dance shapes while wearing suits edged with bright neon piping. During a triumphant, crunching *Sonne* it actually feels like the entire stadium is in danger of burning down. It's nuts, and it's terrifying and it's brilliant. Won't somebody please call the fire brigade...

Fraser Lewry



# THE CULT

## A SONIC TEMPLE



### OCTOBER 2019

15 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY **SOLD OUT**  
 17 BIRMINGHAM O2 ACADEMY  
 18 CARDIFF GREAT HALL **SOLD OUT**  
 20 LEEDS O2 ACADEMY  
 21 ABERDEEN LIVE MUSIC HALL

22 GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY  
 24 MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO  
 27 LONDON EVENTIM APOLLO HAMMERSMITH  
 28 BRISTOL ACADEMY **SOLD OUT**  
 29 PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL

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THE ALBUM 'SONIC TEMPLE - 30TH ANNIVERSARY' OUT NOW

A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH ITB

# FEEDER



## NOVEMBER 2019

01 PORTSMOUTH PYRAMIDS  
 02 EXETER GREAT HALL  
 04 OXFORD O2 ACADEMY  
 05 NORWICH UEA  
 07 CARDIFF GREAT HALL  
 08 LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY  
 10 NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY  
 11 BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE

13 INVERNESS IRONWORKS  
 14 GLASGOW BARROWLAND  
 16 MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL **SOLD OUT**  
 19 LINCOLN ENGINE ROOMS  
 20 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY  
 22 LONDON ROUNDHOUSE **SOLD OUT**  
 EXTRA DATES ADDED DUE TO DEMAND  
 17 MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL  
 23 LONDON ROUNDHOUSE

MYTICKET.CO.UK

FEEDERWEB.COM

A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY

KILIMANJARO BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY AND SIREN ARTIST MANAGEMENT PRESENTS

### 40th Anniversary Castles & Eagles Tour



PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS



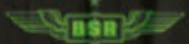
SAT OCT 19th 2019 - LONDON HAMMERSMITH EVENTIM APOLLO  
 SUN OCT 20th 2019 - MANCHESTER O2 APOLLO  
 TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM WWW.MYTICKET.CO.UK DOORS OPEN 5PM AT EACH SHOW

KILIMANJARO BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY AND SIREN ARTIST MANAGEMENT PRESENTS

### 40th Anniversary Castles & Eagles Tour



PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS



★ BLACK STAR RIDERS ★



FRI OCT 18th 2019 - GLASGOW BRAEHEAD ARENA  
 TICKETS AVAILABLE FROM WWW.TICKETMASTER.CO.UK DOORS OPEN 5.45PM



# DEVIN TOWNSEND

EMPATH UK - VOLUME 1

PLUS VERY SPECIAL GUESTS



DECEMBER 2019

THU 05 CARDIFF GREAT HALL  
 MON 09 GLASGOW SWG3 GALVANIZERS  
 TUE 10 MANCHESTER ALBERT HALL  
 THU 12 LONDON ROUNDHOUSE  
 FRI 13 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY

MYTICKET.CO.UK



NEW ALBUM 'EMPATH' OUT NOW ON INSIDEOUT RECORDS

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A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH K2 AGENCY LTD. & NORTHERN MUSIC CO.



# MARILLION

WITH FRIENDS FROM THE ORCHESTRA



## NOVEMBER 2019

FRI 01 - LIVERPOOL **SOLD OUT** PHILHARMONIC  
 SUN 03 - NOTTINGHAM ROYAL CONCERT HALL  
 MON 04 - MANCHESTER BRIDGEWATER HALL  
 WED 06 - BIRMINGHAM SYMPHONY HALL  
 THU 07 - PORTSMOUTH GUILDHALL  
 SAT 09 - BATH THE FORUM  
 SUN 10 - OXFORD NEW THEATRE  
 TUE 12 - GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL  
 WED 13 - GATESHEAD THE SAGE  
 FRI 15 - SOUTHEND CLIFFS PAVILION  
 SAT 16 - CARDIFF **SOLD OUT** ST DAVID'S HALL  
 MON 18 - LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL  
 TUE 19 - LONDON ROYAL ALBERT HALL

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A KILIMANJARO & KNOWMOREPROMOTIONS PRESENTATION

# Rick Wakeman

## THE GRUMPY OLD CHRISTMAS SHOW

A FAR FROM INTIMATE FESTIVE  
EVENING OF MUSIC AND LAUGHTER

FEATURING MUSIC FROM  
THE NEW CHRISTMAS PORTRAITS ALBUM  
AND OTHER CLASSICS FROM  
HIS ENORMOUS REPERTOIRE



### DECEMBER

THU 05 **STOKE** VICTORIA HALL  
 FRI 06 **LONDON** CADOGAN HALL  
 SAT 07 **WATFORD** COLOSSEUM  
 MON 09 **BIRMINGHAM** TOWN HALL  
 TUE 10 **HARROGATE** ROYAL HALL  
 FRI 13 **BUXTON** OPERA HOUSE  
 SAT 14 **BRIGHTON** THEATRE ROYAL  
 SUN 15 **POOLE** LIGHTHOUSE  
 WED 18 **LIVERPOOL** GRAND CENTRAL  
 THU 19 **MANCHESTER**  
 ROYAL NORTHERN  
 COLLEGE OF MUSIC  
 FRI 20 **CHELTENHAM** TOWN HALL  
 SAT 21 **WARWICK** ARTS CENTRE

THE ALBUM 'CHRISTMAS PORTRAITS' OUT 29 NOV

MY **TICKETS + VIP MEET & GREET**  
**VIP** PACKAGES AVAILABLE FROM **RWCC.COM**  
 MYTICKET.CO.UK

A KILIMANJARO PRESENTATION

# STEVE HACKETT

## GENESIS REVISITED TOUR 2019

### SELLING ENGLAND BY THE POUND

The Entire Album!

Plus **SPECTRAL MORNINGS** 40th Anniversary

& New Album Highlights



## NOVEMBER 2019

Sat **SOLD OUT** Aylesbury Waterside  
 Sun **SOLD OUT** Ilkestone Leas Cliff Hall  
 Wed **SOLD OUT** Cambridge Corn Exchange  
 Sat **SOLD OUT** Cardiff St David's Hall  
 Mon **SOLD OUT** Liverpool Philharmonic  
 Fri **SOLD OUT** Salisbury City Hall  
 Sat **SOLD OUT** Reading Hexagon  
 Mon **SOLD OUT** Birmingham Symphony Hall  
 Sat **SOLD OUT** Gateshead The Sage  
 Tue **SOLD OUT** Manchester Bridgewater Hall

### LIMITED TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE

Fri	08	Leicester De Montfort Hall
Tue	05	Sheffield City Hall
Tue	12	Brighton Dome
Wed	13	Portsmouth Guildhall
Tue	19	York Barbican
Wed	20	Bath Forum
Fri	22	Halifax Victoria Theatre
Mon	25	Edinburgh Usher Hall
Wed	27	Southend Cliffs Pavilion
Fri	29	London Hammersmith Eventim Apollo

MYTICKET.CO.UK

HACKETTSONGS.COM NEW ALBUM 'AT THE EDGE OF LIGHT' OUT NOW  
 A KILIMANJARO PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH SOLO

# HELMET

## 30TH ANNIVERSARY

30 YEARS X 30 CITIES X 30 SONG SET. NO OPENERS.



### OCTOBER

FRI 04 / NOTTINGHAM BETA  
 SAT 05 / LEEDS THE KEY CLUB  
 TUE 08 / GLASGOW G2  
 WED 09 / MANCHESTER GORILLA  
 THU 10 / LONDON O2 ACADEMY ISLINGTON

MYTICKET.CO.UK / HELMETMUSIC.COM

A KILIMANJARO & FRIENDS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH PRIMARY TALENT INTERNATIONAL



# THE BIG 3-0 TOUR

## 3 ICONIC BANDS PLAY 3 CLASSIC ALBUMS



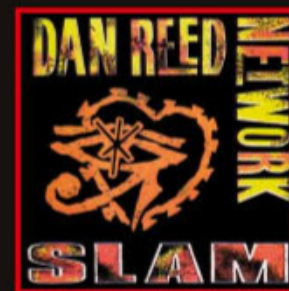
# GUN

## TAKING ON THE WORLD



# FEN

## TOUGH IT OUT



# DAN REED NETWORK

## SLAM

DECEMBER 2019

09 BRISTOL O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY  
10 SOUTHAMPTON ENGINE ROOMS  
11 LONDON O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE  
13 WOLVERHAMPTON KK's STEEL MILL  
14 NORWICH THE WATERFRONT

15 NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY  
17 NEWCASTLE O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY  
18 LEEDS O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY  
20 MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2  
21 GLASGOW BARROWLAND

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PRESENTED BY ACADEMY EVENTS, MJR, VMS LIVE, DHP FAMILY, STEEL MILL EVENTS & REGULAR MUSIC BY ARRANGEMENT WITH THE FRESH START COMPANY, SIREN ARTIST MANAGEMENT, STRANGE WORLD MANAGEMENT & ZERO ONE ENTERTAINMENT IN ASSOCIATION WITH PLANET ROCK



EUROPEAN TOUR 2019

OCTOBER

30 LONDON  
O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY  
ISLINGTON

NOVEMBER

01 LEEDS  
BRUDENELL  
SOCIAL CLUB  
02 MILTON KEYNES  
CRAUFORD ARMS  
03 SOUTHAMPTON  
ENGINE ROOM  
04 BIRMINGHAM  
THE MILL  
05 GLASGOW  
GARAGE  
06 MANCHESTER  
CLUB ACADEMY  
07 BRISTOL  
FLEECE  
08 STOKE  
SUGARMILL

MICHAELMONROE.COM

7pm ACADEMY EVENTS PRESENTATION BY ARRANGEMENT WITH UNITED TA LIGHT AGENCY

# FLYING COLORS



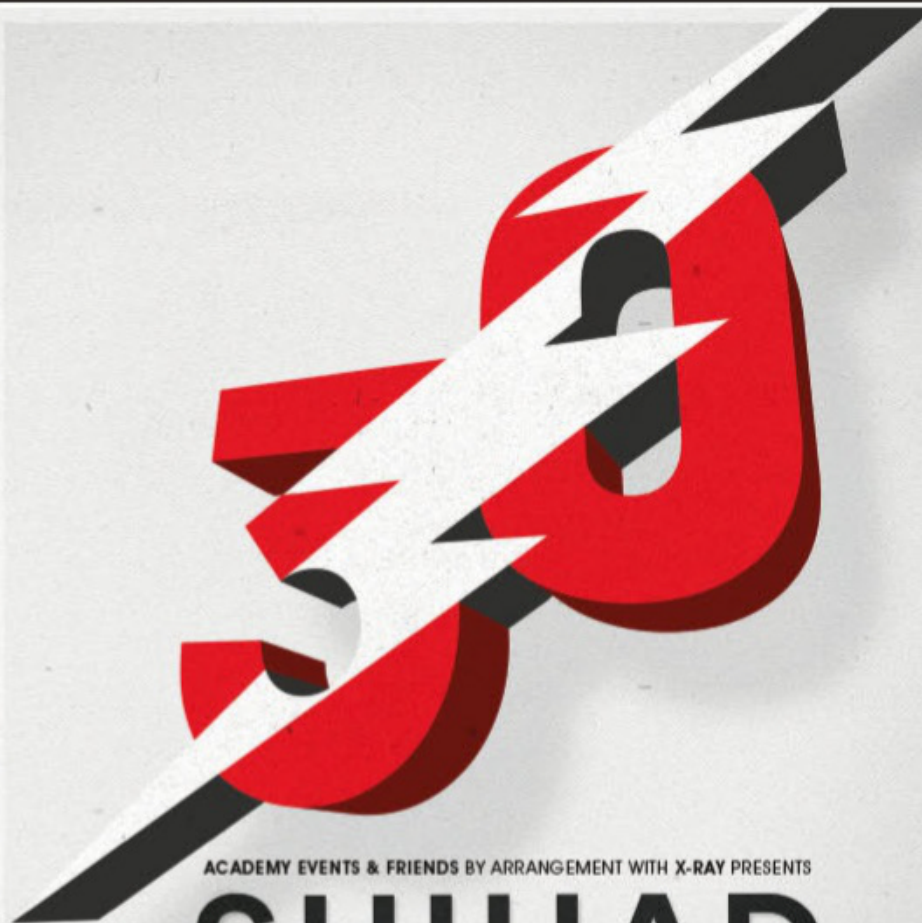
Neal Morse Steve Morse Carey McPherson Mike Portnoy Dave LaRue

SAT 14th DEC 2019 O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE, LONDON

Look for Flying Colors' new album 'Third Degree' coming in September 2019 from Mascot

AN ACADEMY EVENTS PRESENTATION

TICKETMASTER.CO.UK & ALL USUAL AGENTS



ACADEMY EVENTS & FRIENDS BY ARRANGEMENT WITH X-RAY PRESENTS

# SHIHAD

## UK ANNIVERSARY TOUR

PLUS SPECIAL GUESTS

26 NOV SHEFFIELD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2  
27 NOV GLASGOW G2  
28 NOV MANCHESTER ACADEMY 3  
29 NOV LONDON O<sub>2</sub> SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE  
30 NOV BRISTOL THEKLA

ALOHA

WWW.SHIHAD.COM



# Alice Cooper

OL' BLACK EYES IS BACK



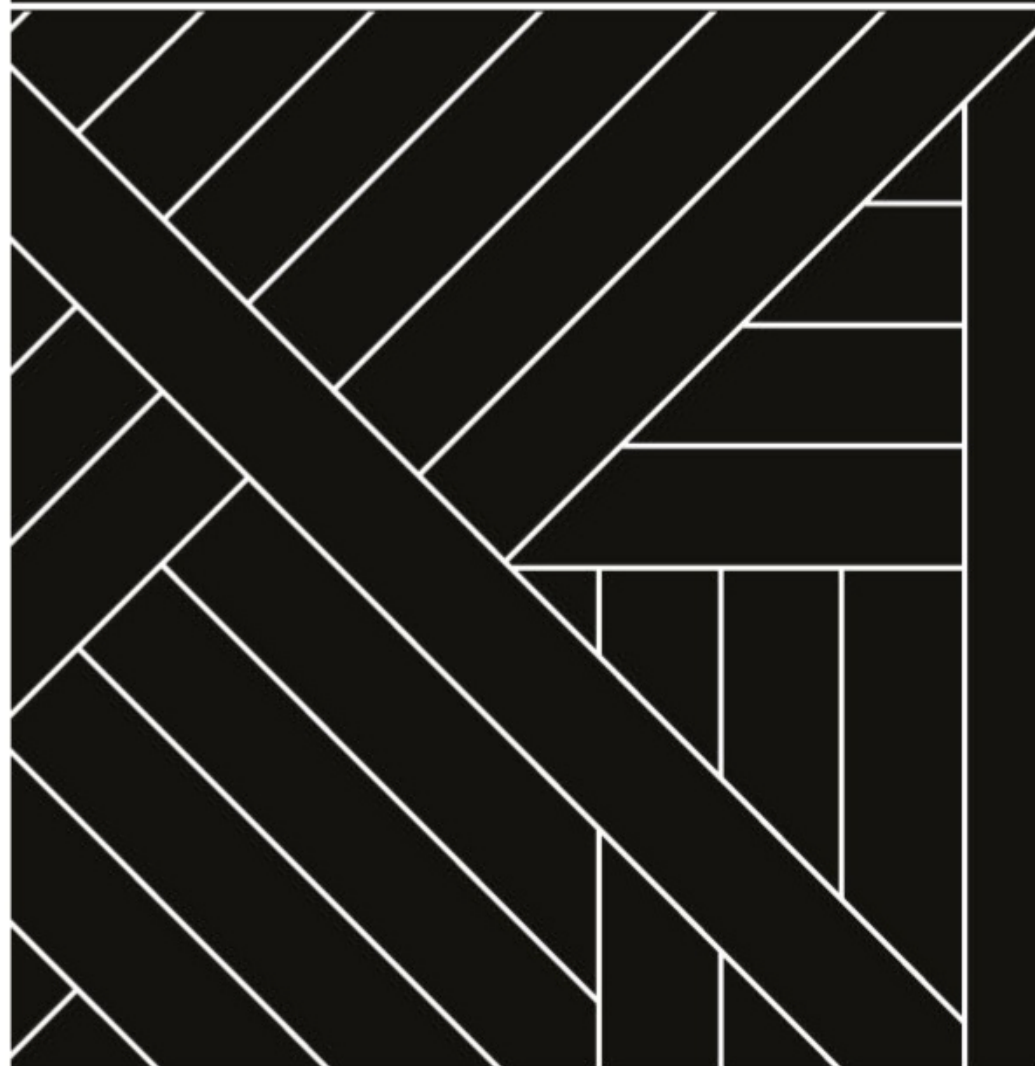
SPECIAL GUESTS *the stranglers* & MC50

**OCTOBER**

- 04 MANCHESTER ARENA
- 05 ABERDEEN P&J LIVE **SOLD OUT**
- 07 LEEDS FIRST DIRECT ARENA
- 08 BRIGHTON CENTRE **SOLD OUT**
- 10 LONDON THE O2
- 11 BIRMINGHAM RESORTS WORLD ARENA
- 12 MOTORPOINT ARENA CARDIFF **SOLD OUT**

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AEG PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH UTA

# OMD Souvenir



# the psychedelic furs

Plus THE WENDY JAMES BAND



**OCTOBER 2019**

TUE	01	MANCHESTER O2 RITZ
THU	03	PORTSMOUTH PYRAMIDS CENTRE
FRI	04	BRIGHTON DOME
SAT	05	BIRMINGHAM O2 INSTITUTE
MON	07	LEEDS STYLUS
TUE	08	GLASGOW O2 ACADEMY
WED	09	NEWCASTLE O2 ACADEMY
FRI	11	NOTTINGHAM ROCK CITY
SAT	12	LONDON ROUNDHOUSE

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## OMD 40 YEARS - GREATEST HITS

- 26 OCT NOTTINGHAM – **SOLD OUT** CONCERT HALL
- 27 OCT YORK – **SOLD OUT**
- 28 OCT HULL – BONUS ARENA
- 30 OCT GATESHEAD – **SOLD OUT**
- 31 OCT GLASGOW – **SOLD OUT** NCERT HALL
- 01 NOV MANCHESTER – **SOLD OUT** OLLO
- 03 NOV SHEFFIELD – **SOLD OUT**
- 04 NOV LIVERPOOL – **SOLD OUT** HEATRE
- 05 NOV BIRMINGHAM – **SOLD OUT** HONY HALL
- 07 NOV LEICESTER – **SOLD OUT** MONTFORT HALL
- 08 NOV BATH – **SOLD OUT**
- 09 NOV OXFORD – **SOLD OUT** EATRE
- 11 NOV GUILDFORD – **SOLD OUT**
- 12 NOV PORTSMOUTH – GUILDHALL
- 13 NOV WATFORD – COLOSSEUM
- 15 NOV CAMBRIDGE – **SOLD OUT** EXCHANGE
- 16 NOV IPSWICH – **SOLD OUT** HEATRE
- 17 NOV BEXHILL – **SOLD OUT** RR
- 19 NOV BOURNEMOUTH – **SOLD OUT** EON THEATRE
- 20 NOV LONDON – EVENTIM APOLLO

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AN AEG PRESENTATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH X RAY

# ronnie wood

with his wild five

# mad lad

A LIVE TRIBUTE TO CHUCK BERRY



**THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2019**  
**O2 SHEPHERDS BUSH EMPIRE**

AEGPRESENTS.CO.UK AXS.COM TICKETMASTER.CO.UK  
AN AEG PRESENTS PRESENTATION



The Gig Cartel presents  
The original singer, songwriter  
& guitarist with The Stranglers  
**HUGH CORNWELL**  
ELECTRIC



**MONSTER**  
TOUR NOV / DEC 2019

- |                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 12 - LIVERPOOL ARTS CLUB    | 24 - EXETER PHOENIX          |
| 13 - CARLISLE BRICKYARD     | 26 - BASINGSTOKE HAYMARKET   |
| 14 - ABERDEEN LEMON TREE    | 27 - NOTTINGHAM RESCUE ROOMS |
| 15 - EDINBURGH LIQUID ROOMS | 28 - BURY ST EDS APEX        |
| 16 - LEEDS BRUDENELL        | 29 - BILSTON ROBIN           |
| 17 - BURY MET THEATRE       | 30 - SWANSEA SIN CITY        |
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FRI 22	NOV	NEWCASTLE	O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2
SAT 23	NOV	GLASGOW	GARAGE
SAT 30	NOV	LIVERPOOL	O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2
FRI 06	DEC	OXFORD	O <sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2
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FRI 11 OCT	CARDIFF	GLOBE
SAT 12 OCT	SOUTHAMPTON	ENGINE ROOMS
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SAT 19 OCT	NORWICH	ARTS CENTRE
FRI 25 OCT	DERBY	FLOWER POT
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SAT 26th OCTOBER 2019 OXFORD O<sub>2</sub> ACADEMY2  
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O<sub>2</sub> Academy  
O<sub>2</sub> Academy

OCTOBER  
SAT 05 LIVERPOOL O<sub>2</sub> Academy2  
SAT 12 BIRMINGHAM O<sub>2</sub> Academy2  
NOVEMBER  
SAT 16 LONDON O<sub>2</sub> Academy2 Islington

DECEMBER  
SAT 23 LEICESTER O<sub>2</sub> Academy2  
FRI 20 BOURNEMOUTH O<sub>2</sub> Academy  
SAT 30 OXFORD O<sub>2</sub> Academy2  
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# The Soundtrack Of My Life

Opeth singer/  
guitarist  
**Mikael Åkerfeldt**  
on the special  
records, artists  
and gigs that  
are of lasting  
significance  
to him.

Interview: **Polly Glass**



**“Joni Mitchell is a genius. I don’t use that word a lot, but with her it’s easy.”**

**T**his feature could have been tailor-made for Mikael Åkerfeldt. The Opeth frontman, metalhead-turned-progressive rocker and sometime Steven Wilson collaborator has a record collection the size of Brazil, cultivated with love and a deep level of super-nerdism. At 45 the Stockholm native still drinks in music with the thirst and passion of a 21-year-old discovering it all for the first time.

## THE FIRST MUSIC I REMEMBER HEARING

It’s probably ABBA. I was born in the year seventy-four, when they won the Eurovision Song Contest, so it was inevitably on the radio at the time.

## THE GREATEST ALBUM OF ALL TIME

Normally I say The Beatles’ White Album. Why? It’s the longest. And everything is in there, pretty much – heavy metal, blues, avant-garde stuff, electronic, psychedelic, piss-takes of rock’n’roll, folk... or music that doesn’t necessarily have a label, that was their own, like *I’m So Tired*.

## THE GUITAR HERO

Ritchie Blackmore in Rainbow. He’s my guiding light in terms of all the great music that he’s done over the years, his stubbornness, his fearlessness, his humour, his dress code... I admire that guy to the point where it’s just below homosexuality.

## THE SINGER

Scott Walker. He’s one of my favourite singers of all time, and also one of my favourite composers. *Scott 4* is often considered to be his masterpiece, but I always tend to go to for *Scott 3*. I also have a personal relationship with it, because that was a time in my life when there was a death in the family. I can’t even begin to explain it, but I was in a vulnerable state when I immersed myself in that album. So it has some personal meaning to me – more than any other album, I think.

## THE SONGWRITER

Joni Mitchell. Her lyrics are great. They’re just so direct and so vulnerable, while they are also poetic. One of her records that really stuck with me was *Court And Spark*. She’s a genius. I don’t use that word a lot, but with her it’s easy. How she evolved as a musician, her lyrics, her vocals, her fearlessness...

## MY FAVOURITE RECENT DISCOVERY

Can I have two? One of the best records I’ve heard in twenty years, I discovered only maybe a year or so ago. It’s a soundtrack to a Swedish film called *The Chameleon*. It was written by Lars Färnlöf and it’s basically melodic jazz. It’s quite proggy, but with jazz players very seductive. The other is also a soundtrack, this time for *The Devil In Miss Jones*, which was a slightly occult-themed pornographic film that I haven’t seen. You play it and you have to play it again and again. And when you stop playing it you go around singing it. It’s

fantastic. I’m kind of intrigued to see how they could get this beautiful piece of music in a sex scene and make it work.

## MY BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

The first that comes to mind is Porcupine Tree’s *Stupid Dream*. They’d put out *Signify*, which I thought was amazing, and along comes *Stupid Dream*. I was like: “Na, not my cup of tea.” But because I had this huge respect for Steven Wilson I kept listening, and it sailed up to being my favourite Porcupine Tree album.



## THE MOST UNDERRATED BAND EVER

There’s so many, but one is Coroner. It’s early progressive thrash, you could say. I mean, Switzerland hasn’t delivered shitloads of music – it’s Celtic Frost and Coroner. I was in a documentary on Coroner. Everyone that was interviewed for it said the same thing: they should have been much bigger than they were. The second album, *Punishment Through Decadence*, is my favourite.

## THE BEST RECORD I MADE

The new one, of course [*In Cauda Venenum*]. Not because I have to, but because I think it is. If you exclude the new one, then it’s... I like *Watershed*, and *Hove Heritage*. Either of the two.

## THE WORST RECORD I MADE

The first one. It’s basically how it goes. That’s how I see it. By no means do I think it’s bad, but that’s the record I’m most detached from, because I was nineteen then, and I’m forty-five now.

## MY SATURDAY NIGHT/ PARTY SONG

We have two: *Still Of The Night* by Whitesnake, and *Look At Yourself* by Uriah Heep. *Look At Yourself* you put on if you didn’t get drunk enough, cos you put that song on and the alcohol will go to your brain quicker. I’ve tested it, it works.



## THE SONG THAT MAKES ME CRY

Joni Mitchell’s *A Case Of You*. I cried to *Tarot Woman* by Rainbow for some reason. *You Take My Breath Away* by Queen. *Wuthering Heights* by Kate Bush... I rarely cry, but I can feel overwhelmed to the point where I’m on the brink of crying.

## MY ‘IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE’ SONG

Not to give too much away... I’m not sure if we have a go-to. We just moved houses, so we don’t have a turntable in the bedroom right now. But it would be *Animals* by Pink Floyd, a record called *Sunset Waiting* by John G Perry, who was in Caravan for a while... I tried Mike Oldfield’s *Tubular Bells*. I think it was only played once. I played the section where Viv Stansall introduces the instruments, and my girlfriend went: “That’s fucking annoying!” And I was like: “It’s funny!” Needless to say nothing happened that night.

## THE SONG I WANT PLAYED AT MY FUNERAL

*Tubthumping* (*I Get Knocked Down*), Chumbawamba.

*In Cauda Venenum* is out on September 27 via *Moderbolaget/Nuclear Blast*.







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